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HISTORY
OF THE
RAM FLEET
AND THE
MISSISSIPPI MARINE BRIGADE
IN THE
WAR FOR THE UNION
ON THE
MISSISSIPPI AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

The Story of the Ellets and their Men.

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED
UNDER THE
AUSPICES OF THEIR
SOCIETY OF SURVIVORS.

TWO PARTS IN ONE VOLUME

ST. LOUIS
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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD.

In the whole course of the Civil War it fell to the lot of few commands in any branch of the service to achieve the distinction attained, under the famous leadership of the Ellets, by the Mississippi River Ram Fleet, and its successor, the Mississippi Marine Brigade.

This large place in the public mind of that period, and the extensive record mention of the service it rendered to the Union cause, were in part due to a characteristic alertness and mobility of the command itself, but more to the dashing spirit of heroism and bravery, infused by a gallant leadership, which largely pervaded every action of the command.

Being a product of the War Department, and not of the Navy, manned, officered and fought by military men, with field of operations entirely within that of the western Navy, and in a measure subordinated thereto, it is not surprising that there was some friction, and at times a lack of co-operation, neither creditable to the officers concerned, nor advantageous to the service.

Again the Marine Brigade was largely recruited from other Army organizations, under War Department authority, and thereby the displeasure incurred of officers whose commands had thus been temporarily depleted—a displeasure shown in many instances (as many Marines afterward learned to their sorrow) by such muster-roll entries as "Absent without Leave," "Never returned from Hospital," and even "Deserter"—charges which some have encountered in later years, when applying for pensions, though they had served faithfully with the Brigade, under their re-enlistment, and were honorably discharged therefrom. Bearing these facts in mind the reader will not be at a loss to account for an occasional unfriendly criticism, reproduced along with events of this history.

In all the Civil War histories appears more or less frequent mention of the Ellets and their men of the Ram Fleet and Brigade. The published records of the civil war, and the public prints of the time, contain frequent accounts of their achievements. But so fragmentary and disconnected are these records, and so inaccurate and conflicting the current reports of many incidents in their eventful career, that the desire has long been cherished by the survivors of this command, and their friends, that a distinct History of its organization and service be written and published. This volume is the result.

In its preparation the Authors have had access to all the material above referred to, beside an abundance of authentic information in the way of log books and diaries, which with letters and sketches of events written at the time, afforded measurably complete and accurate data for the narrative, which we have been at great pains to make as full and reliable as possible.

We have purposely dealt sparingly in criticism, and likewise in the laudation of even our own heroes, believing that the truthful story of men's deeds best speaks in either praise or blame. It will no doubt be found by some of the survivors that these pages tell the story in some part quite at variance from their memory of the events, but they are assured that in all essential particulars the facts as stated are from the "records of the time" which are far more reliable than the memory of the best of us—the Authors themselves included.

It had been our purpose to mention the names of the crews, and note changes as they occurred in succession, but the records available were so incomplete, and the changes, from promotion, transfer, discharge, etc., so frequent, that it was found impracticable to do more than copy such lists of officers and men as the records, reports or diaries, showed to have taken part in any special service, mentioned in the work.

Our original plan was to add a biographical appendix to the volume, but the data for it was so meager and imperfect that the more

attractive plan of a war-time photo gallery was substituted, though at a very considerable increase of cost. Some of the pictures secured, being faded and blurred, their copies are of course imperfect. But the large number of excellent copies, showing the familiar Comrade faces of the Auld Lang Syne, make this gallery a unique and valued feature of the book, which it is believed will be highly appreciated.

To avoid confusion in the mind of the reader we here mention two or three series of facts about names, which it will be well to remember. First, the re-naming of all the U. S. Forts taken possession of by the rebels at the outbreak of the war; thus our Fort Wright became the rebel Fort Pillow, Arkansas Post became Fort Hindman and Fort De Russey, Fort Taylor, etc., these names frequently alternating in these pages.

The second point is to guard against confusion (constantly occurring during their service) in the names and rank of the several Ellets. The Civil Engineer who constructed the rams was Charles Ellet, "Jr." (his father and grandfather having borne the name Charles) and his rank was Colonel of the staff. His son, Charles Rivers Ellet—a Medical Cadet during the first few months of his service—was made a Colonel of the line and given command of the Ram Fleet—after the promotion of his uncle Lieut. Col. Alfred W. Ellet, to be Brigadier General. John A. Ellet (nephew of the General) was Lieut. Colonel, second in command on the rams under Col. Charles Rivers Ellet, and became Commander, when the latter was assigned to the Marine Infantry. Edward C. Ellet was a Lieutenant on his father's staff, and Richard C. Ellet, his cousin (a brother of John A.) was a Lieutenant in the cavalry battalion.

There were two Porters in the naval service on the Mississippi, of whom these pages make mention, and it may be well to note their respective rank and position, to avoid confusion: Captain W. L. Porter, commanding the *Essex*, of the Mississippi Flotilla, and Commodore David D. Porter, commanding the mortar fleet of the Gulf

Squadron. The latter, early in the Marine Brigade period, became an Admiral, and succeeded Commodore Davis in command of the Mississippi Squadron. His Naval History, published in later years, makes frequent and favorable mention of the services of the Ram Fleet and Marine Brigade.

One point more—that the eye may aid the understanding of the reader—we have, in the narrative (larger type) portion of the work, printed the names of all vessels of the Ram Fleet and Marine Brigade in small capitals, naval vessels in Italics and rebel vessels in quotations.

It is our sincere hope that this Story of the Ram Fleet and Marine Brigade may meet the expectations of the Survivors and their Friends, and justify their pride in the achievements of that memorable Fleet, as recorded in these unpretentious pages. And so, with affectionate regard, we inscribe them to our Comrades—

To the Honor of the Living, and in Memory of the Dead, who during three and a half years of Heroic Warfare, afloat and ashore, earned the Gratitude of their Country, in helping to preserve it, an unbroken Heritage of Liberty, for Coming Generations.

WARREN D. CRANDALL,
Late Capt. and Asst. Adjt. Gen. M. M. B.

ISAAC D. NEWELL,
Late Captain, A Infantry M. M. B.

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**Col. Charles Ellet, Jr., Originator of the Naval Ram, who Built
and Commanded the Mississippi River Ram Fleet.**

Sketch of Col. Charles Ellet, Jr.

The Ellets trace their ancestry to the Quakers. One Samuel Carpenter, who was with the colony under Penn, settled near the present site of Salem, N. J., and from the union of his daughter to one Charles Ellet, of whom no history has been traced, was born, with other children Charles Ellet the father of the subject of this sketch. He was a man of sterling qualities, and his wife, Mary Israel, the daughter of a Philadelphian of considerable wealth and social distinction. From this union (1801) came the brothers, Charles and Alfred, whose conspicuous service in the civil war these pages record. Other sons and daughters of these parents constituted a large family. The mother, a woman of education and refinement, long survived her husband, and though over eighty, at the breaking out of the civil war, was an eager and intelligent observer of public events, and being intensely loyal and patriotic, deeply impressed her own feelings and character upon her family and friends. It is little wonder that, under the influence of such a mother, the indomitable spirit of their ancestry should in the hour of their country's peril show itself in deeds of heroism.

Charles Ellet, the originator of the naval ram, was born January 1, 1810, at Penn's Manor, Pennsylvania. His early life was spent on the banks of the Delaware, his educational advantages being those of the neighborhood schools, save a few months tuition in Philadelphia. He was reserved, studious and yet fond of out door sports. He had a fondness for mathematics, in which he excelled. At seventeen he connected himself with a surveying party, first as rodman, and advancing steadily, became so proficient in a few months that he was made an assistant engineer, on what was designated as the 5th Residency, of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. He saved his earnings, and at the end of two years, went to Paris, to enjoy the advantage of the Ecole Polytechnique, in completing his course in mathematics. This he did in the winter of 1830-31, and then toured France, Germany and England, in the student fashion of those days, on foot, carrying his knap-

sack. His first work after his return to America was on the Utica and Schenectady railroad, and later he was appointed to conduct the survey of the extreme western section of the New York and Erie railroad, through the wilderness of western New York. Next, he was four years chief engineer of the James River and Kanawa Canal. During this time he wrote much on the various phases of the public works of Virginia, in which he took great interest. Later he issued a pamphlet on the Laws of Trade, and several other publications treating of the railroads of the United States, their tariffs, needs, etc. He prepared and presented to the City Council of St. Louis, a report and design for a suspension bridge over the Mississippi at that point. Soon after he designed and constructed the Fairmount bridge over the Schuylkill river, the first important suspension bridge in the United States. Having been made president of the Schuylkill Navigation Company, he planned and carried out measures for its improvement and successful operation, encountering skilled and powerful opposition from the Reading railroad, and overcoming it by his own unaided genius. Other noted public works engaged his efforts later, one being the first bridge over the Niagara, three miles below the falls, and another the bridge across the Ohio at Wheeling. In the famous lawsuit, which marked the latter enterprise, between the rival cities of Pittsburg and Wheeling, Ellet was a conspicuous figure, on the Virginia side. Temporarily defeated by the Supreme Courts decision declaring the bridge an obstruction to navigation and enjoining its use, Ellet adroitly secured an amendment to the Postoffice appropriation bill, in the closing hours of Congress, declaring his road and bridge a post route, the effect of which was the overturning of the adverse decision of the supreme court, and the nullification of its injunction.

It is a noteworthy fact that in this contest between two great corporate bodies, the opposing counsel, thus defeated by Ellet were led by a no less formidable lawyer than Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, afterward Secretary of War.

In 1850-51, Ellet was sent by the War Department, to examine the lower Mississippi and report upon its annual floods and the best means for their prevention. His report, with a memoir on the improvement of the Ohio, was published by the Smithsonian Institute

in a work entitled, "Ellet on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers," in which he treats of storage reservoirs in the upper valleys, preventing floods and supplying waters for navigation in the dry season of the year. A few of the plans and engagements of this man of indomitable energy and fertile brain can here be mentioned. Reports and designs for suspension bridges, over the Connecticut at Middletown, over the Ohio at Cincinnati and over the Potomac at Georgetown; his engagement as Chief Engineer of the Hempfield road, and his report in favor of Wheeling on the location of the Western division of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. A notable evidence of his engineering skill was given as chief engineer of the Central railroad. While waiting the construction of its tunnel through the Blue Ridge, Ellet pushed a temporary line over the mountain, and had his engines climbing the ascent at an incline of 295 feet to the mile and making curves of 234 feet radius, thus bringing the road into immediate use for important traffic. It is said this triumph of engineering skill attracted world wide attention.

In 1854, Mr. Ellet went in the interest of the Virginia Central Railroad, of which he was Consulting Engineer, to England France and Germany. While enroute, for the ocean voyage, he learned of the great disaster to the Collins liner, Arctic, which was sunk at sea, in a collision with an insignificant vessel, and the event greatly impressed him, as showing the power and destructive effect of a steam vessel if used as a ram, in naval warfare. The Crimean war was then at the stage where the allied fleets had the Russian navy of the Black Sea penned in the harbor of Sebastopol, and its destruction by the Russian Admiralty was being considered, to prevent its falling into the hands of the allies. Ellet communicated his views to the Russian Government, and offered his services to carry them out, if commissioned to construct and command a few small vessels suited to the work of destroying the fleet of the Allies. His communication was received, and he requested to hold himself in readiness for a call to St. Petersburg, when consideration of the subject was cut short by the assassination of the Czar.

Before his return to America, Ellet who had become an enthusiast on the subject, wrote our Navy authorities urging his plan for a ram system of naval defense for our country, and later he made a

more elaborate presentation of his ideas for strengthening the hulls of small steam vessels, and making their prows solid and sharp, for penetrating and destroying the largest war craft of an enemy. In December, 1855, he issued a pamphlet on the subject which attracted considerable attention, but the Naval authorities were slow to consider, much less to act upon, the suggestions of a "landsman." When the mutterings of our Civil War began to be heard, Ellet, who was for the Union, renewed his efforts to get the Naval authorities to make use of his idea, and was the more urgent as he had reason to fear the alert and aggressive spirit shown both in military and naval circles in the south, would more than likely lead to the use of the ram principle by the latter, should war actually ensue. Being on the alert for news of this kind as the war clouds thickened, he learned that the idea was in fact being considered by Confederates, and in the latter part of 1861, as the contest deepened, he ascertained that they had authorized the reconstruction of a number of vessels for that express service.

The capture of the *Merrimac* by the Confederates in the Norfolk Navy yard, and the confirmed report of work being begun for her conversion into a ram, led Ellet to renew his efforts to wake up the Union authorities to the impending danger. He at once brought to public attention the fact of the construction of steam rams being then in progress by the Confederates—five vessels being then (February 6, 1862) nearly ready for service—one being the *Merrimac* at Norfolk, two at Mobile, and two at New Orleans. He pointed out the danger from the former, if allowed to get into Hampton Roads, and again urged the matter of ram defense upon the naval authorities at Washington. On the 8th of March the "*Merrimac*" appeared in Hampton Roads, and although an unwieldy craft, very quickly demonstrated her destructive power, by crashing into and sinking first the *Cumberland* and then the *Congress*, and then retired unharmed. The subsequent conflict between this clumsy ram and the Federal *Monitor*, still further demonstrated the effectiveness of the ram idea, and convinced Ellet that a suitably constructed and managed boat, of moderate size, would prove in operation as a ram, well nigh invincible. Secretary Stanton had taken note of the novel ideas of his old antagonist in the Wheeling bridge case, and was impressed with their feasibility. In

the great emergency then upon the country, his patriotism rose above any lingering feelings of resentment, and he summoned Ellet to a conference. This interview took place on the 14th of March, lasting, it is said, four hours, while Senators, Generals and ambassadors waited. The danger point was then Hampton Roads. An emergency plan was agreed on for the immediate purchase and fitting, and manning, under Ellet's supervision, a few small strong steamers for rams. Armed with letters of authority to Commander Goldsboro and General Wood, at Fortress Monroe, Ellet at once proceeded there. But receiving no co-operation, and scant courtesy from the former, who after some delay assured Ellet of his ability with the Monitor and his Men-of-War, to cope with the Merrimac, should she again attack them—Ellet found no way to carry out the plan, and reluctantly abandoned it, and so reported by letter to the War Secretary. But while thus disappointed in his first endeavor, events of momentous importance were taking place on Western waters, destined to bring to the impatient inventor his long desired opportunity. This brings us to the beginning of the Story of the Mississippi River Ram Fleet.




CHAPTER I



March and April, 1862

Glance at the War in the West. Ominous Situation on the Mississippi. Ellet the Voted Civil Engineer Summoned to Washington by Secretary Stanton. Ellet's Plan of a Ram Fleet. Ellet Commissioned to Enter Upon its Construction. Co-operation by Mayors and Citizens of Ohio River Cities. Orders, Correspondence, and Details of the Purchase, Refitting, Equipment of the Nine Vessels to constitute the Ram Fleet, and Their Assembling at New Albany. The Officering and Manning of the Rams, and Instruction in the New Warfare.—Under "Hurry Orders" Fleet Pushed to the Front. Situation of the Blockade at Fort Pillow. Ellet's Efforts to Engage the Enemy.

A glance at the field of war in the west, in early March (1862) shows the situation by no means flattering to the Cause of the Union. The army of Gen. Curtis in the southwest, already far beyond its base at Springfield, was faced by the combined forces of Price and Van Dorn and their Indian allies, and hosts of recruits had been gathered to give battle on their own ground, to an inferior invading force. But the decisive battle at Pea Ridge was soon after fought and Curtis' victorious army slowly made its way toward the Mississippi. Had the rebels triumphed, as they confidently expected, Curtis' army would have been annihilated, as no relief could have been afforded in time to save it.

The aggregation of raw troops sent to constitute the army of the Tennessee under Grant, had won its first victories at Donelson and Henry, and was now being reinforced and reorganized for a campaign against Corinth, where the forces of Beauregard and Johnson, were concentrating in formidable proportions. The varied assortment of hastily constructed gunboats, equipped and manned by the

War Department, was co-operating with the army movements on the Tennessee, Cumberland and Mississippi, under Commodore Foote. Columbus and New Madrid were abandoned by the rebels, and Island No. 10 was their advanced position, with fortifications at Pillow and Randolph, a short distance below, both strong natural positions, presented by the upper Chickasaw bluffs. These were being strengthened by extensive earthworks and heavy guns. Meantime a considerable River Defense fleet had been authorized by the Confederate Government, and its vessels, selected from river and gulf steamers, were being refitted at various points below, to be manned and assembled as rapidly as possible to assist in the permanent blockade of the Mississippi. Some, if not all, these vessels, it was learned, were fitted to be used as rams. The news of the threatening condition of affairs below Cairo created profound alarm in official circles, and led the Secretary of War to enter at once upon the most vigorous measures for the protection of his "infant navy" of the West.

Ellet's return from Hampton Roads was timely. Mr. Stanton again summoned him to Washington to confer as to measures to meet the new danger on the Mississippi. Stanton's dispatch to Gen. Halleck, at this time, is given both to indicate the Secretary's views of the situation, and his estimate of the value of Ellet's idea.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

March 25, 1862. 6:35 p. m.

Maj. Gen'l Halleck, St. Louis:

Yours of this date has just arrived. Information of the same character reached me from other sources this morning, and this evening a number of Western boat builders met at the Department to consider the best mode of meeting the rebel boat. The universal opinion among naval and military engineers in the East, is that a floating ram striking and sinking the iron-clad vessel is the best mode of encountering it. A large class boat at St. Louis might perhaps be got ready in a short time. Would it not be well for you to consult some of your river men? Commodore Vanderbilt has given his steamship Vanderbilt for the purpose, and it is now at Norfolk to meet the Merrimac, and although not armour clad he is very confident of being able to run her down. Chas. Ellet, a distinguished engineer, has given the subject much attention. I will send him tomorrow to see and consult you and with authority to act as you may deem best. He is a man of courage and energy and willing to risk his own life upon his own job.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

The Secretary lost no time in putting himself in communication with the mayors and boards of trade of the cities on the Ohio, where the facilities for aiding this enterprise were to be had, and in two days had matters so far arranged as to enable him to issue the following letter of authority and instruction to Mr. Ellet, from which it appears the "conference" he referred to in his dispatch to Gen. Halleck had caused a change in his original purpose of sending Ellet to St. Louis. Hitherto most if not all the war vessels then in service on the Mississippi and Tennessee had been constructed there, and it was there he first looked to have the work done. No doubt this course was advised by the conference mentioned. Here is the document which authorized and inaugurated the Mississippi River Ram Fleet enterprise.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., March 27, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr.:

Sir: You will please proceed immediately to Pittsburg, Cincinnati and New Albany, and take measures to provide steam-rams for defense against iron-clad vessels on the Western waters. Instructions will be forwarded you by mail to Pittsburg, in conformity with which you will guide your proceedings, and from time to time receive such other instructions as may be required. All contracts and purchases will be made by a special Quartermaster, to be appointed to act with you, and all expenditures will be made by him and under his direction. You will be compensated for your services at the rate of pay allowed by law, for similar services, to-wit: \$10.00 per day and mileage at the rate of 10 cents per mile.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Not an hour was lost by Ellet in entering upon this duty. Proceeding with all dispatch to Pittsburg, he at once enlisted all available assistance in commencing the work of purchase and reconstruction. In this he was aided by the local authorities, and by public spirited citizens whose co-operation Mr. Stanton had invoked, and without which the work must have proceeded at a very slow rate. The manner of this co-operation is illustrated in the following from one of the points to which the War Secretary looked for aid.

New Albany, March 27, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Owing to the non-existence of a board of trade in this city I have taken the responsibility of calling together a number of the most prominent citi-
zens

to act upon your dispatch, enjoining upon them entire secrecy regarding the same. The meeting has appointed J. B. Ford, James M. Haines and D. C. Hill to act as their committee, and Joseph Brooks to act as assistant quartermaster general (!) These gentlemen are in every respect well fitted for the positions and are among our most prominent and substantial citizens. They will act immediately and energetically upon any suggestion or instructions you may honor them with.

A. S. BURNETT,

Mayor of the City of N. A.

We here append Mr. Stanton's courteous reply to the foregoing, as further showing the vigor and earnestness of his efforts to foster the ram fleet undertaking.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., March 27, 1862.

A. S. Burnett, Esq., Mayor of New Albany:

This department returns thanks to you for your discreet, prompt and energetic action. Chas. Ellet, Esq., the Engineer of this Department, started west yesterday to direct the work that is desired. He has instructions to proceed from Cincinnati to New Albany and confer with you and give directions. Before receiving your dispatch I had conferred with Senator Wright, Mr. Craven and Mr. Brown, of your city. The latter gentleman at my earnest request consented to act as quartermaster, but as you have provided a proper person I will adopt him. Mr. Ellet will be with you speedily. Please acknowledge this.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Of like import is his dispatch one day later to Mr. Ellet at Pittsburg:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., March 28, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Esq., Monongahela House, Pittsburg:

Unless for imperative reasons, do not confine your work to one locality. Give a portion to Cincinnati and New Albany, so as to avoid the imputation of local favoritism and also to bring out the whole mechanical energy of the Ohio Valley. Proceed as speedily as you can to Cincinnati. The Board of Trade there, are ready to act energetically with you. Confer with Mr. Butler, the President of the Board, at Cincinnati with whom I am in communication. Report daily to me.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Meantime Ellet was maturing and modifying his plans to meet the conditions he found confronting his herculean undertaking. On

the following day he wrote Secretary Stanton informing him of some of these conditions, and his plans to meet them; also outlining his plan of operating the rams when on the scene of action, and suggesting a system of reward to be promulgated as a stimulus to bravery, on the part of men to be enlisted in this extra-hazardous enterprise. This letter was as follows:

Pittsburg, March 29, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Dear Sir: I wish to give you my views as briefly as possible. It is said that the enemy have eleven gun-boats below Island No. 10 and as I understand, they are supposed to have others, fitted up as rams, ascending the Mississippi, one of which has reached Memphis. I propose to strengthen the hulls of some of the swift, strong coal tow-boats which I am told can only be obtained here, and fit them up as speedily as possible to be used as extempore rams, to go down to Island No. 10, or any other stronghold of the rebels; and at a proper time during the contest, when the rebel gun-boats seem to be in a favorable position, run down before the batteries and drive our rams at full headway into the rebel boats, doing what I can by preliminary preparation to save the men if our boats should sink. These boats the river men here say will all make 18 or 20 miles an hour down the Mississippi. It will be very difficult to hit them at that speed, and I will try to protect the engines and boilers against any ordinary shot. It is not impossible that I can so strengthen our own hulls as to sink any Mississippi boat we can hit fairly and save our own. I seek good boats, and do not intend to make alterations which will injure them materially for future use, if they are not lost in the service. If successful in sinking the rebel gun-boats at Island No. 10 I would proceed down the river and lay our boats up under Gen'l Pope's guns. I shall need a few strong and swift tow-boats of a smaller class, and these would then be used as pickets to watch the approach of the rams or other hostile boats below New Madrid. I may need also one or two large old boats to shelter our rams in running under the enemy's batteries. This is about my plan to meet the present condition of things, though the conditions may change materially before I am ready to carry out the plan. We ought to have at least as many boats, as there are boats to run down. Indeed we ought to have more. No boat can stop to strike twice, and some may not hit their adversaries fairly, or may get the worst of it. The men must take service with a full knowledge of the dangerous nature of the duty; the enemy's fire being the least of the dangers. I would like to be authorized to assure them that their names will be reported to the Sec'y of War who will recommend them if they do well, to the President and Congress. I think this will be valued more than specific rewards.

Very respectfully,

Your obt's servant,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

On the same day the Secretary sent to Gen. Halleck at St. Louis the following message, indicating his confidence in Ellet's ability to accomplish the miracle of producing a fleet of war vessels—a work of many months under most favoring conditions—in a few days, or weeks at farthest. The message plainly indicates the apprehension at Washington concerning conditions on the lower Mississippi, alluded to in Ellet's letter of the same date.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., March 29, 1862.

May, Genl Halleck, St. Louis:

Steam rams are rapidly being prepared under the direction of Engineer Ellet at Pittsburg, and he proceeds immediately to Cincinnati to fit up some there. They are the most powerful stamboats, with upper cabins removed—bows fitted in with heavy timber. It is not proposed to wait for putting on iron. This is the mode in which the Merrimac will be met. Can you not have something of the kind speedily prepared at St. Louis also?

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Two days later (one of them Sunday) finds Ellet writing the Secretary advising of further plans, and showing the intensity of his desire and purpose to make his new arm of the service effective, and if possible invincible.

Pittsburg, March 31, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

I made but little progress Sunday but am doing much better today. Mechanics are scarce. I have no reply from you to my letter of Saturday. Your last instructions to the Special Quartermaster limit me to one more boat here, and I do not wish to exhaust my authority until one of the best boats arrives. My plan is to run by the enemy's batteries and sink their transports and gun-boats below, wherever we can find them. With all my care the machinery will be much exposed to the enemy's shot. Some of the boats will probably be crippled. I ought to have enough for the work and for contingencies.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

But the Engineer's letter had not gone astray. On the same date as the above the Secretary was making the looked-for reply. It is of special historical interest to note the assurance given in this letter, of

reward to those who should distinguish themselves by bravery in action in the service of these rams:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., March 31, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Pittsburg, Pa.:

Your letter just received. Your plan is approved. I do not mean to impose any improper limit, but wish the work not confined to one locality, but distributed, so as to get the utmost possible vigor, and therefore recommend immediate inspection at Cincinnati and New Albany, where an immense amount of mechanical industry may work at the same time with the force at Pittsburg. You need not consider yourself restricted to one more boat at Pittsburg, but I wish to know by telegraph what extent is proposed beyond that, before contracts are made. The crew is of great importance. I will give honorable reward and also prize-money for successful courage, in large and liberal measure.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

During the rapid succession of events, favorable to the Union cause, which now followed the rebel attack and repulse at Shiloh—the capture of Island No. 10, and the falling back of the enemy to the line of Memphis and Corinth, leaving their advance position on the Mississippi at Fort Pillow, supported by their gunboats of demonstrated prowess—Ellet and his coadjutors were intensely engaged, at Pittsburg and other points successively visited, in the herculean task they had in hand. Some idea of the difficulties they encountered and overcame is afforded in the subjoined dispatches of that period:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 1, 1862.

John Jeffrey, Esq., Civil Engineer, Cincinnati, Ohio:

You are authorized in conjunction with Mr. Butler, the President of the Board of Trade, to take immediate measures to prepare three rams for the Mississippi. It must be done within twenty days. Mr. Ellet, now at Pittsburg, is the engineer having general charge, but you may act without waiting for him. The strongest and swiftest boats should be selected.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 2, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Mr. Jeffrey is, I believe, competent for the work. He is now at work and the committee will aid him. He wants Ellet's plans soon as possible.

History of the Ram Fleet.

Boats suitable are scarce; owners are disposed to ask high figures. May ask authority to have appraised and take possession.

JOS. C. BUTLER,
Pres. Chairman of Com.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington City, D. C., April 2, 1862.

Jos. C. Butler, Pres. Board of Trade, Cincinnati, Ohio:

The Department will submit to no speculative prices. Good boats enough can be had at Pittsburg for a fair price. If not, then I will authorize the Quartermaster to seize such boats as may be needed, as other property is taken for military purposes, leaving the parties to seek remuneration from Congress. For those purchased the price will be paid immediately, but I do not want any contracts concluded until approved by this Department. Mr. Ellet will probably be at Cincinnati tonight or tomorrow evening.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 3, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Mr. Ellet arrived this morning. Steamers entirely different required than supposed yesterday by Mr. Jeffrey, and the committee have telegraphed that you designate some one to make purchase of the Champion No. 3. William Hooper, a wealthy, honest and capable citizen, was named in previous dispatch for Assistant Quartermaster. The following resolution, adopted by the committee, means simply that they indorse or pass an opinion on the success or wisdom of Mr. Ellet's plans: *Resolved*, That this committee acting under telegrams of the Secretary of War to Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Butler, consider their only duty to be acting solely from patriotic motives to appraise the value of such steamers as Mr. Ellet, the Engineer of the War Department, may designate, and to see that the work that may be necessary under his directions be done as speedily and economically as possible.

JOS. C. BUTLER.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 3, 1862.

Jos. C. Butler, Pres. Board of Trade, Cincinnati, Ohio: -

A commission for Mr. Hooper as Quartermaster will be forwarded by mail tomorrow, so as to enable him to contract and make payment in proper form. In the mean while let no time be lost in making the proposed purchase and starting the work. Hours count and every hour should bring the rebellion nearer its end.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 3, 1862.

Joseph C. Butler, President Board of Trade, Cincinnati, Ohio:

Before the receipt of your letter, which reached me today, I spoke to Mr. Shields, Steamboat inspector, and requested his co-operation. He has performed some work for this Department with energy and great satisfaction. You will please engage his services if you find a suitable boat can be purchased on fair terms.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 3, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

I arrived here this morning, conferred with the committee and Mr. Jeffrey, and have inspected a number of boats. None are satisfactory, but I think the most reliable as well as the cheapest is Champion No. 3, past five years old, and which can be obtained for \$10,000 cash. I do not see that we can do better under the circumstances. I am considering a plan for sheltering my boats by means of a bulwark raised on some of the large coal barges. Does my authority cover the privilege of doing so, if I decide on it?

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

The committee consider the price reasonable. Will you authorize some one to purchase?

JOS. C. BUTLER,
For the Committee.

To Sec'y of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 3, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio:

Mr. Butler is authorized to purchase the Champion at the price named, if he thinks it fair and you think the boat suitable. You are authorized to adopt whatever mode of protection you deem proper. It is said some good boats may be had at New Albany, and that a large force of workmen and ample material can be had there.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, this April 5, 1862.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

I have selected the Lancaster No. 3 in place of the Champion No. 3. The Lancaster is larger and stancher, though two years older. I have had her inspected. She is reported sound. The price is \$8,000. A boat builder is

engaged to make the alterations, and she will be on the ways and in hand this afternoon.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

New Albany, April 7, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Have heard of nothing from your agent, Mr. Ellet. Feel a deep solicitude to have something done immediately. Would be glad to co-operate with you. Would suggest taking some of the largest and staunchest steamers in the West, and encase them completely with railroad iron. We think two or three could be gotten ready here in thirty days, such as would control the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Have retained a large number of mechanics, who wanted to go to other points to obtain employment. Shall we not hear from you again immediately?

A. S. BURNETT,

Mayor.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 7, 1862.

A. S. Burnett, Mayor, New Albany:

Mr. Ellet having started work at Pittsburg is now at Cincinnati and I have directed him to proceed to New Albany; but if you will send me an estimate of the cost of one of your largest and staunchest boats, fitted up and primed according to the best plan devised by your own mechanics, I will consider it and if approved will leave the matter in the hands of your own people. I want Pittsburg, Cincinnati and New Albany skill, economy, enterprise, and patriotism to compete against each other. Will give each an equal, fair test, and then choose between them for future work. Time is a great element of choice.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 7, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

I encounter impediments owing to all dry docks and ways being owned by one company. The work is not yet begun but I trust it will be tomorrow. I want authority to have it done at any place on the river I may select. Mr. Shields is here.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 7, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio:

You are authorized to have the work done wherever it can be with most facility and advantage in your judgment.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 8, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

My work here is now fairly under way. I will leave it in Mr. Jeffrey's care and take Mr. Shields tomorrow to New Albany to aid me in procuring a boat and commencing work there.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 8, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio:

Call on Mr. Burnett, Mayor of New Albany. He and a committee there will aid you. Notify me of your arrival there.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 8, 1862.

William K. Nimick, Assistant Quartermaster, Pittsburg:—

You will please purchase whatever Mr. Ellet desires, and also whatever you think is needed for your own work. The immense pressure on the Quartermaster General's office has no doubt occasioned the delay in sending instructions. His attention will be called to the matter tomorrow morning. I have already drawn one requisition on the Treasury in your favor for \$25,000 and will supply funds whenever you estimate upon me. Urge on the work. We have glorious news from the West, and hope soon to send a shout back from the Chesapeake.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Pittsburg, Penn., April 8, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Mr. Ellet telegraphs from Cincinnati for one barge and 9,000 cubic feet of oak. Barge and timber cost about \$35,000. Shall we purchase? Work on steamers progressing rapidly. River rising. Plenty of water. Have no instructions from Quartermaster General.

WM. K. NIMICK.

Louisville, April 10, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

The boats which approach nearest my wants are the Switzerland now at Portland, price \$13,000, and Queen of the West at Cincinnati, price \$16,000. Please authorize Mr. Butler, of Cincinnati, to purchase both. I will send the Switzerland up to Madison tomorrow. There are no means of drawing her out at New Albany.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

History of the Ram Fleet.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 11, 1862.

Joseph C. Butler, Esq., President Board of Trade, Cincinnati, Ohio:—

You are authorized to purchase the *Queen of the West* at \$16,000 and the *Switzerland* at \$13,000, being the price named by Mr. Ellet. The latter boat is at Portland.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 11, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Louisville:—

Mr. Butler has been authorized to purchase the boats named in your telegram at prices mentioned.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Cincinnati, April 12, 1862.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

The saw mills are flooded here and at Madison and the work consequently stopped.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Cincinnati, O., April 14, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

The work here is progressing finely. The *Lancaster* I hope will be finished this week. I go tomorrow to Madison, thence to Pittsburg.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Cincinnati, April 17, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:—

The *Switzerland* at Madison and the *Lancaster* and *Queen of the West* here, are progressing rapidly.

Boats at all suitable are very scarce. The *Monarch* will be here tonight and will be purchased by Mr. Butler at my instance, subject to your sanction, for \$14,000. I propose, if you confirm the bargain, to send her immediately to New Albany, to be prepared.

I will leave for Pittsburg in the morning.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Pittsburg, April 19, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

Mingo ready. *Lioness* will be in four days and *Sampson* in six days. Mr. Ellet arrived this morning.

WM. K. NIMICK.

Pittsburg, April 21, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

I stated in my dispatch of Saturday asking instructions which are not yet received three boats here and one at Cincinnati will be ready as soon as I can obtain crews for them. The men and coal and supplies ought to be engaged promptly, and the two small boats for pickets and tenders, as authorized, should be purchased immediately.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 23, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Pittsburg:

The purchase of the coal and barges and two tenders is approved and may be done immediately. The compensation of crew and mode of manning is being considered by the Department. Brooks informs me the work on the *Monarch* is going on briskly.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Pittsburg, (Pa.) April 24, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

In accordance with the authority given in your dispatch of yesterday the committee have purchased two small and swift boats for tenders one for \$9,000 and the other for \$11,000; also 80,000 bushels of coal, in eight barges, all to be delivered by Wednesday next. The high water has caused some delay, but it is now falling rapidly and the boats in preparation here, which are too long for the locks, must be run down below the falls at an early day.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

The nine vessels to constitute the fleet were the *LIONESS*, *SAMPSON* and *MINCO*, three powerful Ohio river stern-wheel tow-boats, the *QUEEN OF THE WEST*, *MONARCH* and *SWITZERLAND*, three large side-wheel steamers, the *LANCASTER* a smaller sidewheel boat, and the *FULTON* and *HORNER*, two small stern-wheel tow-boats, as tender and dispatch boat for the fleet. The first three named were purchased and fitted out at Pittsburg, the *LANCASTER* and *QUEEN* at Cincinnati, the *SWITZERLAND* at Madison, the *MONARCH* at New Albany, and the smaller boats at Cincinnati. All were not finished at the places named, but they were hurried below, and some work was done on several of them at New Albany and at Mound City on their way to the front. A general description of these boats and the place of their purchase and re-

construction, with other details of interest pertaining to their conversion into rams, is found in a report made by Ellet himself at the request, and for the information of, Commodore Foote, a few weeks later, from which we quote the following:

"I was instructed by the Secretary of War, March 27, to proceed immediately and with the greatest expedition to Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and New Albany, and select and prepare the most suitable steamboats I could find in the least possible time as steam-rams, to meet the rebel gun-boats and rams on the Mississippi River, the honorable Secretary, expressing the hope that not more than twenty days would be consumed in getting them ready for service. In response to that order, I selected three of the strongest and swiftest stern-wheel coal tow-boats at Pittsburgh of which the average dimensions are about 170 feet length, 30 feet beam, and over 5 feet hold. At Cincinnati I selected two side wheel boats of which the largest is 180 ft. long, 37½ ft. beam, widest part and 8 ft. hold. At New Albany I secured a boat of about the same length but rather less beam, and subsequently I selected another at Cincinnati, of about the same class as the last, and sent her to Madison to be fitted out. The work was distributed among these four cities by order of the Hon. Secy. of War for the purpose of obtaining command of the mechanics and materials without the risk of producing delay by over drawing upon the resources of any one place. I have thus in hand at this time seven rams, besides two very small stern-wheel tow-boats for tenders, which I am strengthening up so that they also may in an emergency be used as rams. In addition to these steamers I have in preparation three large coal-barges bearing high bulwarks of oak, under which my steamers may be very much sheltered from the enemy's fire. The preparation of these steamboats for the purpose of converting them into rams, consists simply in running three heavy solid timber bulkheads, from 12 to 16 inches thick, fore and aft, from stern to stern, placing the central one directly over the keelson; in bracing these bulk heads one against the other, and the outer ones against the hull of the boat, and all against the deck and floor timbers, and staying the hull from side to side by iron rods and screw bolts. In fact making the whole weight of the boat add its momentum to that of the central bulk head at the moment of collision. In addition the boilers and

"machinery are held in iron stays in all directions; the pilot-house protected against musketry, and the engines and boilers shielded by 2 feet thickness of oak timbers well bolted together. The intention is to endeavor to surprise the enemy's vessels, and aided by the current of the Mississippi run these rams into them and if possible sink them. The boats are not large but they are made very strong in one direction and are quite swift, and will assuredly make their way through the hull of any ordinary transport or gunboat they may chance to hit fairly. The boats here are all well advanced, and some of them will be sent below early this week lest they may be caught by low water. I am not able to state the precise condition of those below, but I think they can be got ready for service in a few days, after I reach the points where the work is in progress."

Meantime, while devoting himself so assiduously to the selection and reconstruction of these vessels, Ellet was no less intent upon their being efficiently manned and commanded. His efforts were therefore given to the selection of the most experienced and energetic men for crews for these vessels. He was of course obliged to depend largely upon the advice of others, constantly impressing upon the minds of all the essential quality of bravery and strict performance of duty under all circumstances. Considering the extra hazards of the proposed service it is greatly to the credit of the boatmen of those cities that crews were obtained without difficulty or delay, and that with very few exceptions these men proved loyal, and true to their trust, and rendered a service of the greatest value to their country. But it was to be their duty to navigate the vessels, not to constitute a fighting force. The plans of the originator of the rams contemplated their defense and fighting force to be a detachment of picked sharpshooters from the army.

In the following communication, which shows the comprehensiveness of Ellet's plans, these points are brought to the War Secretary's attention with several new matters which his keen foresight and apprehension of contingencies, enabled him to see in advance. It will be noticed by the impartial reviewer of these events that some of the suggestions were quite impracticable, and others crude and inadequate, but it must be remembered that the engineer made no claims to a knowledge of military affairs, and the matters of detail of which he

wrote were all subordinate to the one master idea of a plunging war vessel, whose work was to sink and destroy the enemy. This letter is characteristic of the author in vigor and grasp, and in the variety of important points presented:

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 19, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

My dispatch from Cincinnati of 17th, asking authority for Mr. Butler to purchase the *Monarch* for \$14,000 and send her to New Albany to be prepared for service, has not yet been answered. Please inform me whether authority has been granted. I now report that three boats at Pittsburgh, and one and possibly two at Cincinnati, will be ready as soon as I can man them. I respectfully request authority for the committee here to purchase 100,000 bushels of coal and the barges to carry it, so that I may take thirty days' supply with me down the Mississippi. The contract for this coal should be made forthwith. Also authority to me to engage the crews and to promise them fair current Mississippi River wages in their several departments with stipulated allowances for extraordinary dangers and enterprises. The engagement will be very short. What we do with these rams will probably be accomplished within a month after starting the first boat. Success requires that the steamers should be run below the batteries, after which they will be isolated—unable to return and compelled to command the Mississippi, or to be sunk or taken. I think if I can get my boats safely below Memphis I can command the river. A month's wages is no adequate compensation for the volunteer crew. I propose, therefore, that, in addition to their current wages, they all be allowed an extra month's pay for every fortified rebel position they pass below; also, as you have suggested prize-money, if they capture prizes in accordance with existing regulations; but as the arrangements of this expedition are not favorable to taking and holding prizes, but are calculated essentially to destroy the enemy's floating war property and cripple his means of transportation, that for all services of this character which may be rendered such compensation shall be allowed as in the judgment of the Secretary of War is equitable. If these suggestions are not approved I ask to be instructed as soon as possible on these points. I propose to furnish each steamer with a military guard of 12 to 20 men under a Lieutenant with an officer of higher grade in command of the whole, in addition to the ordinary crew of the boat, to do guard duty at all times and assist in the defense of the boats when necessary. This military guard should of course be composed of volunteers drawn from the army. If this suggestion is approved I would ask permission to nominate the officer who would select and command the guard. The total force on board all the seven steamers and two picket tenders will be, including guards and crew, about 350 men. I wish to have in the fleet two small but swift coal tow-boats as tenders and pickets which can be purchased here for about \$10,000 each, and I would be obliged to you if the suggestion is

approved, to authorize their purchase by the committee. I propose to provision the boats as is customary on river steamers, at the owner's (in this case the Government's) expense. I ask to be relieved of all financial cares and to be furnished with a clerk to make the needful purchases and keep the accounts. After the expedition sets out a volunteer surgeon and assistant (if competent men can be had) would be desirable. I will designate the few arms that will be needed in a subsequent dispatch. Respectfully asking for an early answer.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Secretary Stanton's reply [bearing a supplied date six days later] shows that its preparation had been no easy task. Much thought and consultation must have been given the many subjects mentioned. Here it is in full:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 25, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Esq., Pittsburg:

The instructions and authority to be given you have been carefully considered by this Department and the following are communicated: Orders have already been given authorizing the purchase of coal as requested in your telegram of the 19th instant. You are also authorized to engage the crew at current Mississippi River wages. The purchase of two small tugs as tenders has also been ordered. You are authorized to provision the boats as you suggest. The request to promise an additional month's wages for every fortified position passed is so indefinite that with reluctance I am constrained to decline compliance; but I authorize you to promise extra compensation for the capture or destruction of prizes, the amount to be determined equitably by the Secretary of War. You are authorized to add the guard of from 12 to 20 men of the volunteers for each boat, to be commanded by a Lieutenant of your own selection, the whole to be under the common commander of higher grade, and in order to give you authority over the entire forces I propose to appoint you a Colonel on the staff, to hold the rank so long as may be necessary for the complete execution of the enterprise. You are allowed a clerk as you suggest and shall have the services of a surgeon and assistant surgeon. It is the wish of the Department to give you every possible facility to insure success. Military Commanders to whom you may apply for the required guards on showing this authority are hereby directed to comply with your requisitions. It is unnecessary to say, except to guard against misapprehension, that the expedition must move upon the enemy with the concurrence of the Naval Commander on the Mississippi River for there must be no conflicting authorities in the prosecution of war. If any doubt should arise in your mind or you need further instructions

please telegraph and please report the state of your operations on receipt of this.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

In the following response, made to the Secretary's letter on the day of its receipt, Ellet presents more fully his plan for the military management of the fleet, and again betrays his unfamiliarity with questions of rank, and the War Secretary's powers in making appointments. He also discloses his misgivings, if the movements of his fleet upon its peculiar mission are to be hampered by Naval control. Because with all due allowance for brave and gallant commanders, he knew they must always have first regard for the preservation of the ship and its men, while his fighting-idea was to destroy the enemy, regardless of his ships or men. The letter is of special interest also as developing his plan for getting picked officers and men for his boats, and providing for rank and command, in controlling the fleet:

Pittsburgh, April 25, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

I think your instructions of today, just received, will serve to secure a crew of the right stamp. Personally I have two points to submit to you. I would prefer not to hold a military rank unless you deem it indispensable, and, in that case, even though it will be only a temporary appointment and for a special duty, I would much prefer that it should be a higher grade. To command the military guard and to stand second to myself in command of the fleet I would ask leave to name my brother, Capt. Alfred W. Ellet, of the 59th Illinois Volunteers, a man of dauntless energy and devoted patriotism, who will carry this enterprise through if he survives and I am disabled. It would be well, I think, if this suggestion receives your assent, in communicating the commands of the Department to Captain Ellet, to authorize him to bring a limited number of reliable men of his own selection from his regiment. The clause in your instructions requiring the concurrence of the Naval Commander of the Mississippi might embarrass me much. That officer may not have confidence in my mode of warfare. My purpose has been not to remain with the gun-boats or even to show my fleet there until ready to rush or pass the batteries and drive my rams against the enemy's armed vessels and transports wherever they can be found, relying much on the suddenness and audacity of the attack for its success. It is not my purpose either to stop voluntarily anywhere and give the enemy below me time to prepare but to push on with the current and the high flood as rapidly and as far as I can go. I fear that the Naval Commander might not concur in the propriety of

such a movement, which is not in accordance with naval usage, and that he might compel me to lie idle above some fortified position until the flood abated and the opportunity to surprise the enemy in my own way would be lost. I trust you may think proper to reconsider this limitation of my authority and leave me free to act on my judgment, but of course with respectful deference to the opinion of the gallant officer in command of the Mississippi by whose good advice I certainly shall not fail to profit. The work on the boats here has been much retarded by the flood, but they will all be ready as soon as I can engage their crews and get their outfits aboard. I will put a captain and engineer on the Mingo immediately. I wish I could consult each captain in the choice of the crew for his own boat. I have no reason to doubt that the boats in preparation at the cities below will be ready as soon as I can proceed down the river from point to point and man and equip them.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

The War Secretary's answer to the above dispatch explains the questions of rank, and briefly covers the delicate question of possible conflict of authority on the field of action, with the Naval commander. This is a communication of great historic interest.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

April 26, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Esq., Pittsburgh, (Pa.):

In answer to your telegram of the 25th inst., I proposed the rank of Colonel of the Staff because I thought it important, and still think you should have some legal authority to command; and I named the highest rank in my power to give without the action of the Senate, which would involve delay. If this is acceptable to you, your brother can be appointed Lieutenant Colonel on the Staff as your second in command, and he shall have the authority you request to take with him a limited number of reliable men from the regiment in which he is now serving. The peculiarity of the enterprise which you have undertaken induced the expression "concurrency" instead of placing you distinctly under the command of the Naval Commander on the same element in war operations, but as the service you are engaged in is peculiar, the Naval Commander will be so advised and will be desired not to exercise direct control over your movements, unless they shall manifestly expose the general operations on the Mississippi to some unfavorable influence which is not, however, anticipated.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Here follows Ellet's dispatch accepting the appointment offered, and adding some more points for the Secretary's consideration:

Pittsburgh, (Pa.) April 26, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

I have received your dispatch of today and think I understand your views perfectly. I will accept the temporary appointment of Colonel of the Staff, and thank you for placing my brother by my side with the rank you propose. Let me request that he be instructed to return immediately to St. Louis, with such limited number of officers and men as he may select to bring with him. Time is very pressing. I wish to go down the Mississippi on the present flood. Good men are scarce, but I am using every exertion to send off the Mingo on Tuesday and the Lioness on Wednesday, with the coal barges, if they are delivered. If there is any prescribed form of agreement which should be signed by the crews of the boats I will be glad to receive a copy of it. An officer has just arrived with instructions from Commodore Foote to obtain information of what I am doing here, all of which I will give him. I would communicate directly with my brother if I knew to what officer at St. Louis to address my dispatches.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Ellet's next dispatch was to urge the transmission of orders, regardless of military usages, to reach and hurry forward the detail from Curtis' army, to man his fleet. It read as follows:

Pittsburg, Pa., April 27, 1862.

Brig. Gen. Schofield, Commander U. S. Forces in Missouri:

By order the Secretary of War request following instructions sent to Captain A. W. Ellet of 59th Ill. Vols., "Proceed with all possible expedition to St. Louis. Bring with you not exceeding six officers of a grade not higher than 1st Lieutenant, and not exceeding fifty privates all to be volunteers; reliable men to engage in a hazardous expedition down the Mississippi River under my command. The number of men is less important than great expedition and reliable courage in the few selected. Bring good men or none. Lose no time but join me quickly."

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col., Etc.

The day following the War Secretary telegraphed Ellet in these words:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., April 27, 1862.

Chas. Ellet, Jr., Pittsburgh, (Pa.):

We have certain intelligence that New Orleans has been captured there appears to be no doubt of the fact. Commodore Farragut has orders to push

up immediately to Memphis and join Commodore Foote without waiting at New Orleans. You should lose no time in starting your fleet to the same point. Our squadron was at New Orleans two days ago, Sunday, 8 p. m.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

In this dispatch the great War Secretary betrayed a remarkable want of grasp of the difficulties to be encountered by these widely separated forces, so easily ordered to "push up," and hurry down, to form a junction at Memphis, thus as it were completing a campaign, with the dash of a pen,—a task that, with all the brave men and the fighting ships, and the engines and energies of war, backed by all that the Departments of War and Navy could do, was not accomplished till more than a year had elapsed, and many thousands of lives had been sacrificed upon the altar of their country.

Some interesting queries appear in the busy Engineer's next dispatch informing the Secretary of the movement of some of his boats down the Ohio:

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 28, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Your several dispatches have been received and acted upon. No efforts are spared to get the gun-boats under way. The *Mingo* will leave tomorrow noon; the *Lioness* tomorrow evening; both with the coal barges. The *Samson* I think will start Wednesday. The tender *Dick Fulton* can overtake the tows before they reach Louisville. The other tender will wait for the sheltering barge but I think will come up in time. Will the Department supply the clerk who is to act as Paymaster or shall the committee appoint one? Can arrangements be made to enable the wives of the men to draw a part of their pay if they should be detained below? This I find to be important. I will instruct my brother to meet me at Cairo. He will assuredly come rapidly.

CHAS. ELLER, JR.

On the same day Mr. Stanton telegraphed Gen. Halleck at Pittsburgh Landing concerning the new arm of the service, and its advent upon the scene of action. It will be noticed that the Secretary distinctly states that the ram fleet is to be under the orders of Commodore Foote. No doubt he had in mind the purpose of making it clear to the General commanding on the then field of action, that although the vessels were under military officers (in part taken from the General's

own forces) the rams were to act in conjunction with the gunboats, and be subject to the Commodore rather than the General. This is the reasonable explanation for the apparent difference of statement of this relation of the new arm of service to the river Navy, to be observed by comparing it with his previous and subsequent letters to Ellet. Following is the dispatch, no doubt framed with a view to avoiding all questions of authority as to the ram fleet, between Commanders of Army and Navy forces, at the front:

WAR DEPARTMENT,

April 28, 1862.

Maj. Gen'l Halleck, Pittsburg Landing:

The steam rams constructed by Col. Chas Ellet at Pittsburg and Cincinnati are reported to be completed. The Mingo starts from Pittsburg to-morrow noon, the Lioness in the evening; the Samson will start Wednesday. Two others are at Cincinnati and one at New Albany. They are under command of Col. Ellet, especially assigned to that duty. He will be subject to the orders of Commodore Foote and will join him immediately. Lieutenant Col. Ellet, now in Arkansas, has been detailed to join his brother as second in command. I hope this arrangement will be acceptable to you.

EDWIN M. STANTON.

Two days later Ellet informs the Secretary of progress, and the moving of still other boats, and asking for arms and hand-grenades for his men:

Pittsburg, April 30, 1862.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

The Mingo and her tow left yesterday. The Lioness with the remainder of the coal is leaving now. The Sampson has her crew engaged and will leave tomorrow. The officers for the two steam tenders are engaged at work but they will be delayed some two days. I expect to be in Cincinnati to-morrow morning. I am greatly indebted to the indefatigable committee here. Please order the following arms to be delivered speedily to Thomas Sherlock, Cincinnati, for my use: 300 rifle muskets and ammunition, 300 cutlasses, nine small cases of parapet hand grenades, such as would be most convenient for throwing over a bulwark, to clear the bows of the steamer in case of boarding.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Thus, as rapidly as possible, the boats were got off the ways, most of them with their upper works, in a state of partial completion, on which work was continued as they steamed down the Ohio. Those

farthest advanced were assembled at New Albany, where one or two were about completed. Hither Mr. Ellet again hastened, to give personal attention to further details of the completion and manning the boats.

From the correspondence foregoing it is seen that Ellet's plan for the fleet was to have a trusted military officer in command of each vessel, and a selected detail of soldiers as a fighting force; also that he desired to have his brother, Capt. A. W. Ellet, with him to be second in command.

And we have seen that the War Secretary very promptly complied with his request. In furtherance of Ellet's idea of a detail of officers and men to be selected for this purpose, an order had been issued from Washington, and sent through usual channels to Capt. Ellet, of Co. L, 59th Ill. Infantry, then with the army of Gen. Curtis, (which was on its toilsome march across Southern Missouri, after its famous victory at Pea Ridge) to the Mississippi, and had arrived at the town of West Plains. The order, with blank spaces for the names of the enlisted men, was accompanied by authoritative instructions to Capt. Ellet to place therein the names of officers and enlisted men whom he should select.

Upon receipt of this order of detail by General Curtis, his own was issued in pursuance of it, as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTHWEST,

West Plains, Mo., April 29th, 1862.

Special Orders No. 159.

VIII.—Pursuant to orders from the Secretary of War, Captain A. W. Ellet, Co. "I" 59th Regt. Ill. Volunteers, will proceed with the officers and privates herein particularly described, to St. Louis, Mo., (and New Albany, Indiana,.) where he will report in person or by letter to Col. Chas Ellet, Jr. Capt. Ellet will use all possible speed in reaching St. Louis and reporting as ordered.

Detail of officers and privates to accompany Capt. Ellet.

1st Lieut. John H. Johnson, Co. B.

1st Lieut. Geo. E. Currie, Co. C.

1st Lieut. W. D. Crandall, Co. D.

(Names of 50 enlisted men not given).

All of the 59th Regiment Ills. Vols.

By command of Maj. Gen'l Curtis:

H. Z. CURTIS,
Asst. Adj't Gen'l.

The instructions directed that the detail should proceed via St. Louis and report with the least possible delay to Col. Charles Ellet, Jr., at New Albany, Ind. Capt. Ellet, who knew something of the enterprise in which his brother was engaged, at once acted upon the authority thus given, offering the opportunity to such officers and men of his regiment as he judged suited for the perilous duty in hand, who as promptly accepted the detail, and had their names placed in the order. All supposed the service to be a temporary one, and expected, if they survived its perils, to return to the Comrades they were now parting from in the near future, when the cruel war should be ended by the triumph of the Union arms. But this expectation was not to be realized. Instead of an expeditionary service the command to which they were sent was destined to be perpetuated and its perils cost the lives of many of the brave fellows who so willingly offered themselves at the call of duty. The survivors became part of the Marine Brigade, serving on the rams for the remainder of their enlistment, and returned to their old regiment. This detail was perfected in camp on the night of April 28, 1862, and the following morning Capt. Ellet and Lieuts. Currie and Johnson, left in accordance with the order going by way of Rolla and St. Louis. Lieut. Crandall followed next morning with the detachment, and a lot of prisoners, placed in his care by order of the commanding General, to be delivered to the Commander of the Post at Rolla, two days march to the north, where they arrived on the afternoon of April 30. Safely delivering the prisoners, about 100 in number, the Lieutenant got his detachment aboard a train that night, and next day transferred at St. Louis, and arrived at New Albany during the night of May 2d, and reported to Colonel Ellet in person.

Here several of the vessels of the ram fleet were already assembled and the work of reconstruction and defensive armament was about finished under Ellet's personal oversight. The assignment of the officers and soldiers was now made to each, to complete the fighting equipment. As fast as vessels arrived they received their quota of men and supplies, the others, arriving later were to join the fleet below, as rapidly as possible. Immediately upon the assignment of the military force to the boats, Col. Ellet called the officers together, and laid before them his plan of handling the rams, giving extended in-

struction as to the movement of each vessel in any engagement, their co-operation and concert of action, their separate duty, and the main purpose, in every conflict with the enemy. This object, he explained, was to be the destruction of the enemy's vessel. The defence of the same was mainly to repel boarders, the few sharpshooters to be so posted and equipped as to be most effective in close quarters. The safety of the ram was to be a secondary consideration, and if the result of cutting down an enemy should be the loss of the ram, the object would be gained. The men were to be instructed in the use of small boats, and life-preservers, if compelled to take to the water, the fewness of their number reducing the probability of fatalities, even in case of the destruction of their vessel. In the few days intervening, before the sailing of the main portion of the fleet from New Albany, this instruction was frequently repeated, with additional details. A system of signals was also established, both by flags and boat's whistles, by which the movements of the rams, when assembled, was to be governed from the Flagship—the SWITZERLAND. The officers diligently applied themselves to their new duties, instructing in turn both the soldiers and crews, and by the time they arrived at the front much of the spirit of the Commander had been infused into the men to whom he must look, and on whom he must depend, for the success of the "ram fleet idea." But it soon became evident that more officers and more men were needed, and the War office promptly gave authority for their selection and transfer to the fleet, to perfect its equipment. In pursuance of this object the following communication was presented by Lt. Col. Ellet at Madison, Ind., without result, but similar requests at Paducah and Cairo resulted, later, in the transfer of an entire Company to the fleet:

Madison, Ind., May 10, 1862.

To the Commander of U. S. Forces at Paducah, Ky.:

Sir: I am authorized by the Hon. Secretary of War in a dispatch of the 25th of April, which I enclose for your inspection, to make requisition on the Commander of any military post for a limited number of volunteer troops, and a limited number of officers, not exceeding the rank of First Lieut., as a guard to a special expedition down the Mississippi, which the Honorable Secretary has placed under my command. I have instructed Captain (now Lieut. Col.) Ellet, my second in command to call on you with the Honorable Secretary's dispatch, containing my authority to do so, to request you to

give him the opportunity to select from your command such officers of the grade specified not exceeding six Lieutenants, and seventy-five men, as may be willing to volunteer to accompany an expedition deemed extra hazardous, and whom Lieut. Col. Ellet may be willing to accept. Time is most important for the success of the enterprise, and I therefore solicit such prompt co-operation as you can afford.

Your obdt servant,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Under this authority Col. Ellet addressed the following note and request to Brig. Gen. Nelson then commanding that District:

New Albany, Ind., May 22, 1862.

Brig. Gen. Nelson:

Sir: I am authorized by a telegraphic dispatch from the Honorable Secretary of War, dated April 25th, to call on the commanders of the U. S. military posts for a specified number of men, and of officers of the grade of 1st Lieutenant, to engage as volunteers in a steamboat expedition down the Mississippi River, which the Honorable Secretary has placed under my command.

"David M. Dryden, 1st Lieutenant, Company F, 1st Kentucky regiment, now on leave of absence, from Major General Buell, on account of his health, and still unable to be on duty in the field, is well recommended to me as an experienced steamboat captain and is willing, and I believe is able, to do good service in this enterprise, though he can not endure the fatigue of marching.

"I beg leave to ask for the transfer of Lieut. Dryden to my command for this expedition, and to report as directed by you, when it is over.

"I direct this requisition to you supposing that to be the proper course; if it is not, I will be obliged to you to forward it to the officer to whom the application should more properly be made, with the request that the order for Lieut. Dryden's transfer be transmitted to me at Cairo as soon as practicable.

"Lieut. Dryden is now at this place, but will proceed with me in a few days to Cairo.

Your obdt servant,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

Col., Etc."

On the same day came the following urgent dispatch from Washington, the reason for which will be apparent as the reader peruses later pages of this History:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., May 12, 1862.

Charles Ellet, Jr.:

Sir: A telegram from Commodore Foote indicates great anxiety for the immediate descent of your rams. How soon will you be ready to start?

P. H. WATSON,

Ass't Sec'y of War.

Ellet immediately determined to start such of his rams as were nearest completion, and others in succession as rapidly as they could be gotten away. By the most indefatigable efforts of himself and assistants, during the ensuing two days, he was enabled on the 15th to report to the War office:

New Albany, Ind., May 15, 1862.

Hon. P. H. Watson, Assist Sec'y of War:

Five of my boats ought to reach Cairo by tomorrow morning. These five are of the smaller class, and will be taken down to Fort Wright without delay by second in command, Lieut. Col. Ellet, and be held there ready to take part in any movement against the enemy. The sixth will overtake the fleet in the Mississippi. The seventh most powerful boat, will leave Madison to-day and ought to reach Fort Wright by Sunday and I hope to be on board. The ninth and last will leave here Sunday morning and report at Fort Wright. The arms ordered by me have not been received. Please send a dispatch to Lieut. Col. Ellet at Cairo, authorizing him to make a requisition on the Commander of that post or any other source of supply not too far distant, for 300 navy revolvers and 300 breech-loading or other short rifles to use between decks. If no surgeon is appointed for the fleet please authorize Lieut. Col. Ellet to engage Dr. James Roberts, of Carbondale, Ill., who is well recommended, and willing to serve. But my rams shall not be detained for want of arms or doctors.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.

The occasion of the departure of the first boats of the fleet from New Albany, where some of them were fitted and manned, and many of the crews resided, or were more or less personally known, was an event of no small importance, and the wharves and the boats themselves were, as the hour of sailing came, crowded with relatives and friends of the brave men who were loyally risking their lives in their country's cause, many of whom did not survive the perils of the undertaking, though fewer actually lost their lives in battle than could reasonably have been expected, considering the unusually hazardous

nature of the service. The passage down the Ohio was marked by no further incident than the loyal greetings at all landings, and points where groups of people gathered to witness the novel sight the rams presented, with their barricaded boiler decks, and cleared-away upper decks, and iron-cased pilot houses.

Arrived at Cairo with the *MOXARCH* Lt. Col. A. W. Ellet received the expected instructions from the War office as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., May 15, 1862.

Lieut. Col. Ellet, Cairo, Ill.:-

You are authorized to make a requisition on the officer commanding at Cairo or any other officer within reach who can supply you, for 300 navy revolvers and 300 breech-loading or other short rifles or carbines, to use on vessels between decks, where long guns can not be conveniently handled. You are also authorized to engage Dr. James Roberts, of Carbondale, Ill., as Surgeon to the Fleet.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

On the 19th, Col. Ellet reported from New Albany that six rams had gone to the front, and were probably then at the station above Fort Wright (Pillow) and the seventh then about due at Cairo, while the eighth was coaling at New Albany, and to leave next morning. The ninth he reported as then working her way through the canal, and expected to be out next day. The party first designated as clerk and paymaster (Mr. Porter) had declined, and the appointment of another, competent to act as clerk and bookkeeper, and also paymaster, with credentials and funds in hand, was urged. Meantime Col. Ellet reported having secured the services of Mr. A. S. Burnett to write and assist him generally in the affairs of the fleet.

After a brief delay to receive their equipments the fleet pushed on, down the Mississippi, passing Belmont and Columbus, the scene of earliest conflict, and Island Ten where a signal Union victory had recently been achieved by the valor of the boys in blue in both arms of service.

On the 17th of May the advance of the ram fleet arrived just above Fort Pillow. Here the Mississippi river gunboats and transports, with some troops, were then lying at anchor, a short distance above

the Fort, whose frowning batteries commanded the river from the circling bluff below.

The Mississippi Flotilla of which Flag Officer Foote had been in command since September before, had in the intervening months been increased from the original three-gunboat squadron (*Lewington, Taylor* and *Conestoga*) by the addition, from Eads Works at St. Louis, of the *Baron DeKalb, Cincinnati, Louisville, Mound City, Cairo, Pittsburg*, and the *Benton*, and more recently the *Essex*. Besides these ironclads were three wooden gun boats, and something over thirty mortars on rafts. These vessels (fitted out and maintained, until several months after the period of which we now write, by the War Department) were commanded in part at least by naval officers, brought west with him by Captain (afterward Commadore) Andrew H. Foote, and the participation of a number of these boats in the stirring events of the preceding months, constitute a glorious chapter in Civil War History. At Belmont, Donnelson and Pittsburg Landing they demonstrated fighting qualities of a high order, and the more recent operations at Island No. 10—the running of its formidable batteries by the *Pittsburg* and *Carondelet*,—followed by the surrender of that stronghold by Gen. Buford (April 7) with its eleven forts and seventy guns, gave further demonstration of the fighting qualities of the western volunteer Navy. But the onward movement for the recovery of the Mississippi had now met its most formidable obstacle, in the fortifications on the heights at Fort Pillow, flanked by the works at Fort Randolph a few miles below, and supported by the rebel Col. Montgomery's newly arrived "River Defense Fleet," of whose proportions and prowess one significant test had been given a few days before. This fleet, as was intimated in the earlier correspondence of Engineer Ellet with the War office, was known to have several vessels fitted and manned as rams, and lying under the protection of the 40 or more heavy guns of the fort, gave absolute pause to farther southward movement. The blockade of the Mississippi at Fort Pillow was complete. Commadore Foote, had been compelled by his wounds (received at Pittsburg Landing) to relinquish command, and Capt. Chas. H. Davis had succeeded him, becoming Flag Officer of the Western Flotilla, May 9. As if to test the mettle of the new commander, the Confederates, on the very next day, made a concerted at-

tack upon his fleet. Eight gunboats and armed steamers participated in the movement, but it was soon apparent that the real assault was to be delivered by two of them, as rams, for they plunged ahead of the advancing column, under a heavy fire, and in a few minutes the *Mound City* and the *Cincinnati*, had been struck and disabled, and both were with difficulty towed to shoal water, the enemy retiring, with no serious loss to any of his vessels, and but two killed, and five or six wounded, notwithstanding the heavy fire to which they were, for a short time, subjected.

The Confederates had thus themselves furnished a convincing demonstration of what the ram could do in a fight. It was the news of this engagement which had caused the "hurry order" to Ellet, mentioned on a previous page, for it was evident that the gunboats were practically powerless to cope with this new engine of warfare. In the affair of May 10, the rams inflicting the injury were able, notwithstanding the terrific fire of the gunboats, to retire, apparently uninjured, leaving each of their victims crippled and stranded on a neighboring sandbar.

Only occasional movements for observation had been made, on either side, during the ensuing days, but events of great moment, transpiring in the direction of Corinth, served to divert rebel attention from further aggressive action, to the question of abandonment, and retreat. Such was the situation, though it was not known at the fleet, when Col. Ellet arrived upon the scene, May 25.

His dispatch next day to the Secretary of War, gives indication of Ellet's earnestness of purpose to get at the enemy, at the earliest possible opportunity.

Above Fort Pillow, May 26, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:—

I arrived at my fleet yesterday, leaving one of my boats at New Albany ready to follow in 24 hours. The others are all here. I visited Commodore Davis immediately to obtain his views and offer co-operation. The Commodore intimates unwillingness to assume any risk at this time, but will communicate with me again after further reflection touching my proposition to him to run below those batteries and surprise the enemy's fleet and transports before they can escape up the tributaries. To me, the risk is greater to lie here with my small squad and within an hour's march of a strong encampment of the enemy, than to run by the battery and to make the at-

rack. I shall, if necessary, repeat the proposition the moment the Switzerland arrives with the barges. I have prepared to shelter the boats. I wish to take advantage of the high water.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.
Colonel Commanding.

On the following day (May 27) Col. Ellet again called on Flag Officer Davis and (quoting his minutes of the interview) "proposed an advance of our joint fleets, to pass Fort Pillow, and surprise and attack the enemy's gunboats, and get below, and hold the river there". Davis fully considered the suggestion, but did not like to incur the risk, being apprehensive of the movement below, in case of disaster, exposing the cities above to possible danger from rebel gunboats. Ellet had no such fears, and urged the matter strongly, but Davis deferred decision, promising reply in writing next day. Receiving no reply, after two days of further waiting Ellet wrote the War Secretary as follows:

Above Fort Pillow, May 30, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Immediately on arriving here five days ago I called to see Commodore Davis on the flag-ship Benton, and then suggested a joint movement to destroy the enemy's fleet and command the Mississippi below Fort Pillow. The Commodore promised to communicate with me again on that point after giving further consideration. Not hearing from him I renewed the suggestion in a note three days afterwards and was promised a reply yesterday. Up to this time I have not received any. I shall inform him today of my readiness to move alone next Monday morning, unless in the meantime he shall conclude to allow one or more of his gun-boats to participate. Delay will be fatal to the usefulness of this fleet.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.
Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

At this time occurred the first case of fleet discipline, which, being of record, can be accurately given, and thus do no injustice to any concerned. The method of treating the case was an original one, and the result well calculated to deter others from falling into the like mistake. The offence is set forth, as well as the evidence, finding and punishment (a virtual cashiering) in the following:

Steam Ram Monarch, Above Fort Pillow, June 1st, 1862.

Thomas Littell, Esq., Pilot, Etc: -

Sir:— You have informed me this minute, in presence of Lieut. Col. Ellet, second in command, Capt. Dryden 1st Master of the Monarch, and Dr. Roberts, surgeon of the fleet, that you came on board the steam ram Monarch as pilot, in the expectation that that boat was to be placed in no danger, was not to be exposed to shot, where you would be in no danger of being hurt: and that you are not willing to remain on the boat if she is really to be exposed to the casualties of war.

Under these circumstances I have concluded to give you a pass to Cairo, where you can show this letter with a copy of the enclosed oath to which you subscribed when you came on board, to Brigadier General Strong, who will inform you whether or not you are entitled to wages, and how you are to proceed to procure them in case you have any just claim.

While you can not remain longer on board the Monarch, I can not allow you to have any intercourse with anyone in the fleet, beyond which I will place you under no restraint.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

The above is a correct statement of the facts.

THOMAS LITTELL.

I hereby certify that you shipped on board the Monarch as pilot, the 15th day of May, 1862, at New Albany, and have served in that capacity up to this date, at the rate of \$175 per month, if you had fulfilled your obligations and stood by your flag.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.




CHAPTER II



June, 1862

The Rams at Pillow and Randolph. The Whole Flotilla Above Memphis.—Engagement Opened by Rebel Attack.—The Queen and the Monarch Take the Front, and a Decisive Battle Takes Place in Front of Memphis. Complete Destruction of Rebel Fleet Except One Vessel.—Reports, correspondence, Etc.—Wounding and Death of the Ram Fleet Commander. His State Funeral at Philadelphia.—Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet Succeeds to the Command.

Finding the Naval Commander still reluctant to make a move upon the enemy, Ellet determined on taking the initiative without further waiting. He accordingly planned a reconnoissance, to test his own resources for fighting, and discover the strength and temper of the enemy. Before doing so he prepared and sent this dispatch to the Secretary of War, not only disclosing his reasons for the undertaking, but the fine sense of honor he entertained toward that officer, who, in case of disaster to his boats, might incur censure for encouraging such a hazard.

Above Fort Pillow, June 3rd, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

I am about to move with two of my boats against a rebel gunboat lying under the guns of Fort Pillow. An exaggerated view of the powers of these rebel rams has spread among my fleet from the gunboats; and I feel the necessity of doing something to check the extension of the contagion. I am fully impressed with the hazards of this enterprise. But I deem the object sufficient to warrant the movement. I will be in command of the Queen. My brother, Lieut. Col. Ellet, will follow with the Monarch, so as to double the chance of reaching the rebel boat.

I wish you to understand, however this enterprise may turn out, that it is not a rash act, but one which I have deliberately contemplated with a definite and sufficient object.

I wish also to place on record the fact that for whatever ill befalls this fleet you are not responsible, for you have given me from the commencement all the support and aid which it was in your power to contribute. I shall take volunteers only on both boats.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,
Col. Comd'g.

Subsequent events proved the correctness of Ellet's plan. Had the move he urged been promptly made, there is little doubt the guns and stores at Pillow and Randolph would have been taken, and the rebel fleet destroyed there.

The following Instructions for this reconnoissance were issued by the Commander to the officers of the fleet before the movement began:

Steam Ram Switzerland, June 1st, 1862.

A rebel gunboat or ram is reported on the Tennessee shore, below Craighead's point. Lieut. Currie will go on board the Tender Dick Fulton, and take command of Lieut. Hunter's detachment, and direct Capt. Cadman to drop down towards the rebel boat, but well off from the point the object being to incur as little risk as possible from the fire of the fort, though enough, if the position of the rebel boat permits it, to induce her to endeavor to capture the Fulton.

Lieut. Currie is instructed to drop down stern foremost, when nearing the point, so as to be always ready to retreat. He will move on his retreat so as to expose the pursuing steamer to an attack from the Queen of the West, the Lancaster, the Lioness and the Horner, which will be kept in position in the bend on the Arkansas side, far enough above the point, to enable them to gain headway at the moment of collision. Lieut. Col. Ellet, who will command the Lancaster, Lieut. Crandall of the Lioness, and Lieut. Davis on the Horner, will all act in accordance with their instructions, and judge by the motions of the Queen, which will be the flag-ship in this movement, when to make their attack. If either boat should be disabled, she should anchor at once, and it will be the duty of the others to bring her off.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,
Col. Comd'g.

The report, showing the incidents of this movement, and the results attained, here follows:

Mississippi River, Above Fort Pillow, June 4, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: For the purpose of testing the temper of a doubtful crew and as-

certaining the strength of the enemy's position, I determined yesterday to take the *Queen of the West* and try to reach a rebel steamer around Craighead's Point, under the guns of Fort Pillow. The captain, two out of the three pilots, the first mate and all the engineers, and nearly all the crew declined the service, and were allowed to go off with their baggage to a barge. Hastily forming a new crew of volunteers I took command of the boat and directed Lieut. Col. Ellet to follow in the *Monarch* at supporting distance. The captain, David M. Dryden, and all the crew of the *Monarch* stood at their post. The rebel steamer slipped lines and escaped before I could reach her. The firing of the fort was at short range and quite brisk, but I think only revealed about seven or eight guns corresponding with the count previously made in two land reconnaissances by Lieut. Col. Ellet. My boat was not hit. While the strength of the rebel batteries seems to be greatly over rated, their fleet of rams and gun-boats is much larger than mine. It consists of eight gun-boats, which usually lie just below the fort and four others at Randolph a few miles farther down. Commodore Davis will not join me in a movement against them, nor contribute a gun-boat to my expedition, nor allow any of his men to volunteer, so as to stimulate the pride and emulation of my own. I shall therefore first weed out some bad material, and then go without him.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.

A supplemental report of the same date further relates to the unexpected difficulty the Commander of the Rams had to encounter, and his prompt and decisive action to meet the emergency.

Mississippi River, Above Fort Pillow, June 4, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: When all the engineers of the *Queen* declined the hazard of the expedition of last evening, two young men from my military guard offered to handle the engines and run the boat wherever I wished to take her, and did so coolly and skillfully. I trust that I have not exceeded my authority in detaching R. L. Groomes and W. Jackson, both privates of Co. G, 63rd Ill. Regiment, and giving the first the position and pay of chief, and the second the position and pay of first assistant engineer, for which they have license. I must have men who will stand by the engines and wheels under all circumstances. Not one of the soldiers on board hesitated to share the fate of the steamer.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g. etc.

A dispatch on the ensuing day from the Secretary of War to Gen. Halleck, then at Corinth, very clearly reveals his opinion of the

situation, on the Mississippi, and his personal preference that the Ram Fleet should have been placed under the orders of the Military Commander in that field, rather than the Naval, and speaks approvingly of Ellet's declared purpose of independent action.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, June 5, 1862.

Maj. Gen'l. Halleck, Corinth:

I have dispatch from Col. Ellet, Commander of the Ram Fleet at Fort Pillow dated at that place yesterday. He informs me that he has been there a considerable time, and has made repeated applications to Capt. Davis, Commander of the gun-boats, for leave to attack the enemy's fleet, but has been uniformly repulsed. Capt. Davis not only refuses to join Mr. Ellet or give him the protection of a single gun-boat, but also refuses to allow Ellet to attack on his own hook, nor will he allow any of his force to volunteer with Ellet. I regret the President would not place the fleet under your command. Ellet, however made one demonstration, but the rebels slipped anchor and escaped. He says the strength of the rebel batteries is greatly over rated. He declares his intention to go on without the gun-boats.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

During the early morning hours sounds of heavy firing or explosions were heard in the direction of the fort, and as soon as it was light Lt. Col. A. W. Ellet took a few men in a yawl and dropped down to learn what the enemy were doing, and found that the place was abandoned, and a smoking ruin, and all rebel river craft gone. Landing, he went up to the fort and hoisted the stars and stripes, sending back signals, which soon brought the whole fleet to the scene. Col. Ellet at once proceeded with three of his rams at full speed down the river; after learning that Gen. Villipigue and his garrison had escaped with most of their stores and munitions, on their boats. A strong fortification was known to exist at Randolph, 12 miles below by river, and its condition and intentions were soon to be learned.

A dispatch, sent a few hours later, from that point, gives the interesting details:

Opposite Randolph, 12 Miles Below Fort Pillow, June 5, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: To my mortification the enemy evacuated Fort Pillow last night. They carried away or destroyed everything of value. Early this morning

Lieut. Col. Ellet and a few men in a yawl went ashore, followed immediately by Col. Fitch and a part of his command. The gun-boats then came down and anchored across the channel. I proceeded with three rams twelve miles below the Fort, to a point opposite Randolph, and sent Lieut. Col. Ellet ashore with a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the place. Their forces had all left—two of their gun-boats only an hour or two before we approached. The people seemed to respect the flag, which Lieut. Col. Ellet planted. The guns had been dismantled and some piles of cotton were burning. I shall leave Lieut. Col. Ellet here in the advance, and return immediately to Fort Pillow to bring on my entire force. The people attribute the suddenness of the evacuation to the attempt made night before last to sink one of their gun-boats at Fort Pillow. Randolph, like Fort Pillow, is weak, and could not have held out long against a vigorous attack. The people express a desire for the restoration of the old order of things, though still professing to be secessionists.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,
Col. Comd'g Ram Flotilla.

Later, on the same day, in a dispatch to the war office from Fort Pillow, Col. Ellet reports: "On my return to Fort Pillow, I found the gunboats moving down the river. I presume there will be no further obstacle, unless we encounter one at Memphis."

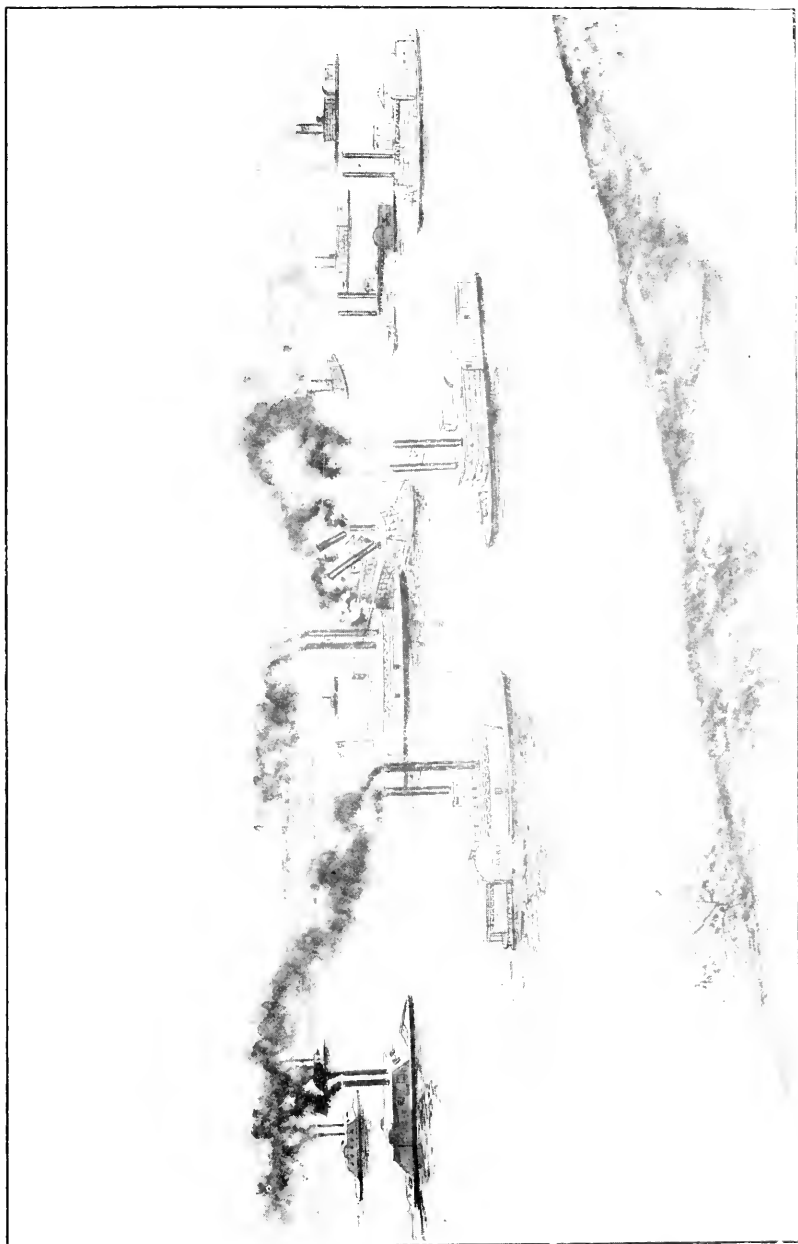
This surmise proved correct. Flag Officer Davis steamed on down the river, not communicating his purposes or plans to Ellet, or indicating what he expected to find below, or do if he encountered the enemy; or what Ellet should do in case of an engagement. It was already quite evident that whatever fighting there might be ahead, was to be done by each fleet according to the plans and ideas of its own commander, regardless of the other. Such proved to be the case. That night Davis' gunboats anchored at the foot of Island 15, about two miles above the City of Memphis. Ellet proceeded down with his whole fleet during the day, directing the *LIXESS*, *SAMPSON* and *MIXCO*, with their heavy tows of coal (2 or 3 barges each) to proceed in the order named, and keep well to the rear, so that, in the event of an action, they would have room to round to, and safely land their tows, before joining in the fight. The *QUEEN*, *MOXARCH*, *SWITZERLAND* and *LANCASTER*, the side wheel rams, being free of tows, were to keep in the advance, following the movements and signals of the *QUEEN*, which the Commander now made his flagship. As night came on the landing signals were given, and the rams were all round-

ed to, landing at convenient distances on the Arkansas side, some 8 or 10 miles above the Gunboats.

At a very early hour next morning (June 6) the four side-wheel rams dropped down the river, the QUEEN in the lead, and finding the gunboats (as he supposed) at anchor, Col. Ellet gave the landing signal, his own boat being rounded to, nearest the Commodore's flag-ship, with the expectation of learning the position and purpose of the enemy, if it had been disclosed. That some defensive operations were intended had been made evident to the fleet at anchor, by a reconnaissance from below, during the night, by some kind of a steam craft, which had made its way close up to the fleet, and then seemingly been set on fire and burned, without an explosion, or any warlike demonstration. Later, it was learned that Commodore Montgomery had sent this tug up to spy the fleet at anchor, preparatory to an early morning attack by his rams and gunboats, that the tug had got hard and fast aground, as it turned back, and could not be gotten off, so was fired to prevent its falling into Federal hands, the men escaping by yawl. In anticipation of an attack Commodore Davis had his five gunboats ready for action, and was awaiting the arrival of Ellet's rams. Of all this, however, Ellet was then unaware.

The morning was hazy and objects were not discernible at any considerable distance on the river. As Ellet was about touching shore for his landing, the boom of a cannon was heard from below, and a shrieking shell came hurtling through the line of gunboats—passing just in rear of his vessel. Instantly he grasped the situation, and countermanded the order to land, and directed that the QUEEN be headed down the river, and signalling to his brother, who personally commanded the MONARCH, to follow him, the two rams were with the utmost haste again headed down stream, and moving toward the scene of coming conflict. The enemy had moved up to begin the attack, and the firing had now become rapid, all the gunboats in succession opening out as the vessels of the enemy became visible. But the mist and smoke rendered the fire of the gunners inaccurate till the boats had drawn nearer each other by the advance of the enemy's line and the slow downward movement of vessels.

The battle was now on, and the long desired opportunity for Ellet and his rams had come. Standing upon the hurricane deck of



NAVAL BATTLE BEFORE MEMPHIS, JUNE 6, 1862.
Davis Boats at the left, Elletts in Center, Rebels to the right

the QUEEN as she got into position for the attack, assured that his brother's vessel was closely following, he urged the utmost speed of his own boat, and his officers and sharpshooters were all intent at their posts of duty. As the two rams in succession passed through the line of gunboats they were cheered by the shouts and waving of caps by the crews, who watched with intense interest the daring dash of the rams upon the line of the enemy. Two of the Confederate vessels, the "Gen. Lovell" and "Jeff. Thompson" were somewhat in advance of their line, and it was their fire following a few signal shots from the "Little Rebel" which opened the battle. Davis' boats were replying from their stern guns, and soon the roar of battle was on, though as yet with little effect. On clearing the front of the Federal battle line, the rams drove forward across the intervening space. The QUEEN was headed for the "Lovell," a vessel of about her own size, and as she neared the "Lovell," the latter veered from her course, as if to avoid the inevitable blow. But her change of course, only presented a more vulnerable broadside, and when the deadly crash came she was almost cut in two, and immediately began to sink, holding her antagonist, for a few minutes, wedged fast by the bow. While thus detained the QUEEN was boldly attacked by the rebel ram "Gen. Beauregard", and received a crashing blow, completely disabling her larboard wheel, so that as soon as disengaged from the now disappearing "Lovell," she was worked slowly to shore opposite the city, in plain sight of which the fight was now taking place. The Moxarch was met boldly by the "Gen. Price" which, however, seemed determined to avoid the "Lovell's" disastrous mistake, and for the brief period, till the crash came, they were steered to meet, head on, but at the moment of impact their prows were just enough out of line to give and receive a glancing blow. "The prolonged crash, and the creaking and groaning of timbers" says an eye witness who participated in the fray, "was fearful, and the vessels passed each other rolling and pitching like giants in mortal combat." The Moxarch was unharmed, but her antagonist had her bow crushed in, and a wheel torn off, and began to take water rapidly. All this had taken but a few minutes, but the other rebel vessels were not idle, though as all carried guns—some of heavy caliber—they directed part of their attention to replying to the guns of Davis' fleet. While getting into position again for

renewing the fight, the *MOXARCH* was rapidly approached by the rebel "*Gen. Bragg*," a large gulf steamer fitted as a ram, and carrying a 32-lb. Parrott on her bow. Quickly the *MOXARCH*'s sharpshooters, by their rapid carbine firing, drove the men from their gun, while the fire was made so hot for the men at the wheel that they lost control of the boat, and the *MOXARCH* was able to elude the intended blow. In so doing she also avoided an attack from the rebel "*Beauregard*" upon the other quarter, and there immediately resulted a collision between the two rebel boats, in which both received disabling injuries. A few minutes later, and the *MOXARCH* had rounded to, and struck the "*Price*" a severe blow which completed her overthrow.

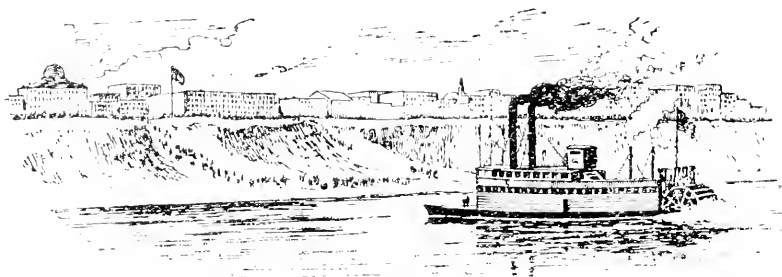
Again the *MOXARCH* circled for headway, and seeing the "*Little Rebel*," the flagship of the Confederate fleet, making for the shore in a disabled condition from a shot in her engine, gave chase and struck her, as she was nearing the bank. The blow proved a good fortune to Commodore Montgomery and his officers and crew, who as the *MOXARCH* struck and drove the lighter vessel well ashore, scrambled overboard into the shoal water, and most of them made their escape. The conflict was now well down in front of the city, and the gunboats, as they drifted slowly with the current, were delivering a deadly and effective fire, with only occasional response from the few rebels yet in the action. From the moment of the first onslaught of the two rams the tide of battle turned against the Confederates, and, after they had once tested the prowess of Ellet's boats, their chief concern and effort seemed to be to get out of their way.

The Arkansas shore opposite the city was already dotted with wrecks. Farthest above and barely visible was that of the ill-starred "*Lovell*" which had gone to the bottom in five minutes, carrying down most of its crew of 86 men of which but 18 were reported rescued. The disabled *QUEEN* was lying directly opposite the upper end of the city; the "*Price*" and "*Little Rebel*" not far below, stranded and most of their crews captured. The "*Sumpter*" and "*Bragg*," not so much injured, were ashore further below, most of their crews having escaped to land. Farthest down was the wreck of the "*Thompson*," from which smoke issued indicating that the shells from the gunboats, had done their deadly work. She was the magazine boat of the fleet, and

in her hold was a large store of powder and shells. She was aground, abandoned, and slowly burning, and too dangerous a customer to approach. Much to the surprise of those watching her it was fully an hour before the mighty explosion came which scattered her fragments to the four winds. In the distance was the fleeing "Van Dorn," and the *MONARCH* in hot pursuit, both filling the air with their black smoke in their efforts to make their best speed. An hour's pursuit satisfied her commander that the *MONARCH* could not overhail her enemy, and the chase was abandoned.

Meantime the *LANCASTER* and the *SWITZERLAND*, which should have joined in the fight, were both detained by a disabling accident, at the place indicated for landing just as the battle began. In attempting to follow the *MONARCH*, there was some confusion or misunderstanding of orders, between pilots and engineers of the *LANCASTER*, a wrong direction was given to a wheel, throwing the stern of the boat against the bank, and unshipping her rudder. This rendered her entirely unmanageable, in the swift current, and required the *SWITZERLAND*'s assistance to get her landed.

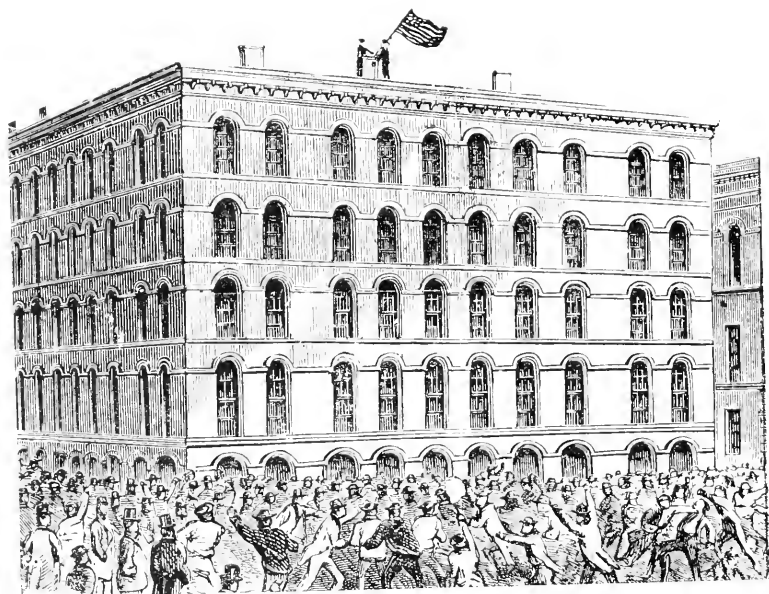
The stern wheel rams meanwhile, arriving in hearing of the conflict, with their barges in tow, at once began the tedious and difficult movement of rounding to, and landing them. The *LIONESS* being half mile in the lead first accomplished this feat, and rounding down again



pushed for the scene of action with all possible speed, arriving too late to participate in the fight, but as the event proved, just in time to serve the purpose of the Commander in the next act of the drama. As the *LIONESS* came in view of the scene above described, she was

signaled alongside the QUEEN, where was the gallant Ellet, seriously wounded by a shot in the knee, but intent upon sending a flag of truce, with a demand, which he had already prepared for the surrender of the city of Memphis. Having no subordinate military officer on board, he had no doubt intended to send the demand by the hand of his son, Charles Rivers Ellet, by means of a yawl, but the timely arrival of the LIONESS, afforded the needed means, and Lieut. Crandall was directed to move over to the city with the LIONESS, under flag of truce, and accompany his son with two unarmed soldiers with two flags, to the headquarters of the commanding officer or mayor, deliver the demand and receive written reply thereto, and then to go to the custom house or Federal building, and hoist the stars and stripes. These orders were promptly obeyed, and to the letter, though the little party met with an experience long to be remembered, as one of difficulty and peril, under the trying condition of being wholly unarmed. Arriving at the landing the Lieutenant, with Medical Cadet Charles Rivers Ellet, the Commander's son, and two soldiers of the boat's guard of sharpshooters (Cyrrus Lathrop and William H. McDonald) each carrying a wrapped flag under his arm, stepped quickly ashore in the midst of a throng of onlookers, with which the bluffs on the city front were lined, and hastily made their way up the street, with the crowd following, or hurrying ahead on either side. Reaching the city building, the party found the mayor in waiting, and lost no time in presenting the message. His Honor began to explain that the Confederate troops had left the city and the mayor, as such, had no authority to act in this emergency—when he was interrupted with the request for a written reply, which, after a few further objections, he proceeded to write.

While this was transpiring the street below was filled with a surging crowd, gathered to see what was going on. The mayor's response was received, accompanied by his very earnest suggestion that it would be prudent for the bearers of the dispatch to return at once to their boat, as he had no available police, and as the streets were thronged with excited men, they might be harmed by an irresponsible mob. When that official was informed that the next thing to be done in obedience to orders was to raise the stars and stripes over the custom house, he protested that trying to do this before troops were land-



ed and the city taken possession of would be very unwise, and he begged that the party should not endanger itself, and perhaps the whole city by attempting it. Finding all appeals of that sort useless, that the party was proceeding in the direction of the post office, Mayor Park joined them and did all he could to allay the increasing excitement, and prevent threatened violence. In the crowd were many men in Confederate uniform, evidently stragglers from their commands and the Lieutenant rightly judged that from such, however lend-mouthed, the party need have little fear. Reaching the Post Office building, a large four story structure, of which the upper floor was an unfinished lumber room, the party mounted to the upper floor with extreme difficulty, as the surging crowd divined the purpose, and were being urged to prevent it. In the crush, one of the flags carried, being exposed to view, was seized, and a dozen hands eagerly tore it to shreds, but the larger one was successfully borne to the roof. The ascent had to be made through a scuttle, reached from the floor below, by means of slats nailed ladder-wise on a stanchion. The two men were left at the foot of this "ladder" to guard it as best they could from the crowd surging up the stairway, while the Lieutenant and Cadet climbed out on the roof to hoist the flag. To their chagrin not a vestige of a staff was found, and returning to the room below, the Lieutenant found a piece of flooring, 6 or 8 feet in length, which was split over a corner of the scuttle, and spliced by means of a roll of bandage fortunately carried by young Ellet, and to this the colors were attached. This improvised flag-staff was borne by the two to the edge of the roof, and placed in opening of a flue, and the folds waved gracefully over the parapet and announced to the excited populace in the street below that the city of Memphis was again under the Old Flag. At that moment, several pistol shots rang out from the street below, fired at the party on the roof, but no harm was done. Soon there was a great commotion in the room below, and angry threats greeted the devoted band at the foot of the ladder, with demands that the flag come down. No effort was made by the Lieutenant or his men to parley with the mob, but each stood resolute at his post, and defied the crowd. The Mayor who had been absent for a time, returned and forcing his way through the crowd, urged the excited ones to desist and hastened to make known to the Lieutenant that the long

absence of the party was causing fears for its safety, and that threats of bombarding the town were made if the men were not immediately returned safely to the boats. He was greatly in earnest and again offered to "escort" the party, with the flag, safely to the landing. He was no doubt disappointed at the obstinacy of the little band, whose members could scarce repress a smile at the threat they well knew must have come from the lusty lungs of Capt. Shrodes, Master of the *Lioness*, a vessel whose only armament for "bombarding" the city was a couple of dozen carbines, and a few boxes of hand-grenades. Just then a rumble, and prolonged sound of explosion was heard, accompanied by a distinct shock as of a slight earthquake, and in an instant all attention was diverted, and the crowd rapidly thinned, and made a rush for the bluffs. No further attention was paid the flag or those defending it, and seeing this, the Lieutenant took one man, leaving young Ellet with the other to guard the flag, and hastened to the *LIONESS*. His return was roundly greeted, and in less time than it takes to tell it the other twelve sharpshooters of the *Lioness* were in line, full armed, and making double-quick time ashore, and up the streets to where the two guards were found on duty, undisturbed. Leaving four men to safeguard the colors till they should be relieved, the Lieutenant and party returned, stopping at several office buildings on the way (the *Avalanche* office being one of them) to gather in rebel flags, left defiantly floating, and by the time they reached the *Lioness* they were well supplied with these trophies. As they neared the wharf, the first of Col. Fitch's troops were landing, from the transport *Van Phul*, and they presently formed about a tall pole standing on the bluff in front of the city with a large rebel flag nailed at the top. Presently, as the *Lioness* left the landing, the pole, which was being chopped, fell with a crash. The gunboats were then slowly making their way back up stream, and finally came to anchor in front of the city. Flag Officer Davis then sent an officer with his demand for the surrender of the city, though the stars and stripes had been floating over its principal building for more than an hour, and Col. Fitch's *Indiana* troops were then occupying the levy in front of the city. In his report Col. Fitch says that his first detachment reached the levy at 11 a. m. and that he took military possession of the city at 3 p. m.

This in brief is the story of the battle before Memphis, and the hoisting of the flag over the city. Within less than two hours from start to finish, one of the most memorable and decisive battles of the Civil War had been fought and won, by the skill and valor of the Federal fleet. The forces engaged were very nearly equal, there being eight Confederate gunboat-rams, each well armed and manned, and on the Federal side five strong gunboats and the two Ellet rams. The conflict was anticipated and prepared for, and in the beginning well fought, by the Confederates, whose commander was said to have invited the people of Memphis to witness the spectacle, assuring them of a victory that would be well worth coming out to see. The audience was on hand, but the spectacle it witnessed was the overthrow and almost complete annihilation of the much lauded River Defense Fleet, over which Col. Montgomery and Gen. Jeff. Thompson were so proudly boasting, at the Gayoso House, the evening before.

Beside the official reports, many accounts from eye-witnesses and participants in this engagement appeared, and, though varying somewhat in details, they afford the assurance of substantial accuracy in the foregoing history of the event. A remarkable feature of this engagement, was that the casualties were nearly all on the Confederate side, their loss in killed (drowned) wounded and missing being over 100, while a few minor injuries occurred to the Federals, except one — the wounding of the gallant Ram Fleet Commander.

Col. Ellet's injury was not, at that time, thought to be dangerous, and though he suffered much, in spite of the best surgical attention available, he continued to give constant attention to fleet affairs, and to reports and correspondence and to further operations below, all of which no doubt tended to aggravate his injuries. In the midst of it all he was inspired by the success of his demonstration of the destructive force of the Ram in Naval warfare — all unheeding the sacrifice he had already made of himself upon his country's altar. And later, when the dangerous condition of his wound became apparent to himself and friends, no word of regret or disappointment ever escaped him.

Here follow the several official reports made by Col. Ellet himself, the dates and subject matter sufficiently explaining their relation to this history:

4
iton, E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

Opposite Memphis, June 6, 1862.

Sir:—The rebel gun-boats made a stand early this morning opposite Memphis, and opened a vigorous fire upon our gun-boats which was returned with equal spirit. I ordered the Queen, my flag-ship, to pass between the gun-boats and run down ahead of them upon the two rams of the enemy, which first boldly stood their ground. Lieut. Col. Ellet, in the Monarch, of which Capt. Dryden was first master, followed gallantly. The rebel rams endeavored to back down stream and to then turn and run, but the movement was fatal to them. The Queen struck one of them fairly, and for a few minutes was fast to the wreck. After separation the rebel steamer sunk. My steamer, the Queen, was then herself struck by another rebel steamer and disabled, but though damaged can be saved. A pistol shot wound in the leg deprived me of the power to witness the remainder of the fight. The Monarch also passed ahead of our gun-boats and went most gallantly into action. She first struck the rebel boat that struck my flag-ship and sunk the rebel. She was then struck by one of the rebel rams, but not injured. She was then pushed on and struck the Beauregard and burst open her side. Simultaneously the Beauregard was struck in the boiler by a shot from one of our gun-boats. The Monarch then pushed at the gun-boat, Little Rebel, the rebel flag-ship, and having little headway pushed her before her, the rebel Commodore and crew escaping. The Monarch then, finding the Beauregard sinking, took her in tow, until she sank in shoal water. Then, in compliance with the request of Commodore Davis, Lieut. Col. Ellet dispatched the Monarch and Switzerland in pursuit of one remaining rebel gun-boat and some transports which had escaped. The gun-boats and two of my rams have gone below. I can not too much praise the conduct of the pilots and engineers and military guard of the Monarch and Queen, the brave conduct of Capt. Dryden, or the heroic bearing of Lieut. Col. Ellet. I will name all parties to you in my special report. I am myself the only one person in my fleet who was disabled.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

[Second Report].

Opposite Memphis, June 6, (via Cairo, June 8, 1862.

It is proper and due to the brave men on the Queen and the Monarch to say to you briefly that two of the rebel steamers were sunk outright and immediately by the shock of my two rams: one with a large amount of cotton, etc., on board was disabled by accidental collision with the Queen and secured by her crew. After I was personally disabled, another, which was also hit by a shot from the gun-boats was sunk by the Monarch, towed to shoal waters by that boat. Still another, also injured by the fire of our gun-boats, was pushed in shore and secured by the Monarch. Of the gun-boats I can

only say that they bore themselves as our navy always does bravely and well.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

[Third Report].

Opposite Memphis, June 8, 1862.

Sir: Three of the rebel rams and gun-boats which were struck by my two rams sunk outright and were lost. Another called the Gen'l Price was but slightly injured, and I am now raising her, and propose adding her to my fleet. I had hoped to have the rebel flag-ship also which we captured, but Com. Davis has taken her for his own use. I propose to start an expedition down the river tomorrow, under command of Lieut. Col. Ellet, and have been much surprised by receiving an offer from Commodore Davis to send a gun-boat along. Of course I will not decline, though I fear the slowness of the gun-boat will impede the progress of my expedition.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

[Fourth Report].

Opposite Memphis, June 8, 1862.

Sir:—There are several facts touching the naval engagement of the 6th at this place which I wish to place on record. Approaching Memphis, the gun-boats were in the advance. I had received no notice that a fight was expected, but was informed on landing in sight of Memphis that the enemy's gun-boats had retreated down the river. My first information of the presence of the enemy was a shot, which passed over my boat. I had four of my most powerful rams in the advance and ready for any emergency. The others were towing the barges, bringing up the rear. I expected of course to be followed by the Monarch, the Lancaster and the Switzerland. The Monarch came in gallantly. Some of the officers of the Lancaster which now held the next place in the line, became excited and confused, but the engineers behaved well. The pilot erred in signals and backed the boats ashore and disabled her rudder. The captain of the Switzerland construed the general signal order to keep half a mile behind her in the engagement, and therefore failed to participate; hence the whole brunt of the fight fell upon the Queen, and Monarch. Had either the Lancaster or the Switzerland followed me, as the Monarch did, the rebel gun-boat Van Dorn would not have escaped, and my flag-ship would not have been disabled.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

The first response from the war office after the battle was as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, June 7, 1862.

Col. Chas. Ellet, Jr., Commander of Ram Fleet on the Mississippi, (via Cairo):—

Your several dispatches have been received and your proceedings cordially approved. The Department most regrets that you have had to encounter so much opposition in the employment of your forces, and hopes that the obstacles will give way before your energetic purpose. You will return the thanks of the Department to the gallant volunteers and soldiers of your command, of whose patriotic and generous courage honorable public notice will be given. You will please report the names and residence of those who exhibit special merit, in order that they may receive due honor and reward, and also of those who shrunk from their duty. In your discretion and conduct the Department feels every confidence and will not fail to support you and your command.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

On the evening of the 8th, Secretary Stanton, having received news of the engagement at Memphis, and of Col. Ellet's wound, sent Mrs. Ellet this kind note, considerably marking on the envelope the words "Good News":

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., Sunday Evening, June 8, 8:30.

Dear Madam: I hasten to inform you that as I expected a dispatch has arrived from your husband, Col. Ellet. Only part of it has yet been received, owing to the wires working badly. Enough has come to show that his wound is not dangerous. It was a pistol shot in the leg, and the long and spirited account he is giving of the action, in which he so much distinguished himself, relieves me from all apprehension for his safety. I shall immediately relieve him from duty, and allow him to return home to your care. In the morning I will send you a copy of his dispatch if the line should be in working order. With sincere regard,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

Mrs. Col. Ellet,

And on the following day he sent a further message in these words, indicating great consideration for the grief-stricken wife:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., June 9.

Dear Madam:—I send enclosed a telegram from your husband, Col. Ellet, to yourself and one to me. The others received from him last night are published in the morning papers which I send you. If you go to see Mr. Ellet please let me know and I will furnish you a pass and through ticket, for yourself and whoever may accompany you. With sincere regard,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

A separate dispatch had been sent to Mr. Stanton, soon after the battle, in which Col. Ellet requested that information of his wound be sent by a discreet messenger to Mrs. Ellet and family, at Georgetown Heights, adding that the wound was a "pistol shot in the leg, and not dangerous." In his reply congratulating Col. Ellet and his men on their achievement, Mr. Stanton tells of conveying the news to Mrs. Ellet in person:

Washington, June 9, 1862.

The news of your glorious achievement at Memphis reached here last evening and our joy was only dampened by your personal injury. You will accept for yourself, and return to your officers and engineers and pilots, soldiers and boatmen, the cordial thanks of this department for the gallantry, courage and skill manifested on that occasion. When your official report is received, official recognition will be made of their respective merits. I went in the evening to your house, and as carefully as I could communicated to Mrs. Ellet your injury. She was, of course, deeply affected, but bore the information with as much spirit and courage as could be expected. It is her design to proceed immediately to join you. I have furnished her with a pass and free passage and she will be accompanied by your daughter. I hope you will keep me advised of your state of health and everything you want. To my official thanks I beg to add my personal regards.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Col. Chas. Ellet, Jr.

Mrs. Ellet at once prepared to go to her husband, and Mr. Stanton so informed him, and made provision for her and her daughter to proceed on the journey, informing them that they would probably meet him at Cairo. But, owing to his reluctance to leave the scene, the delay was such that the wife and daughter reached him before his departure from the fleet.

Colonel Ellet's report to the War office concerning the flag of truce, and hoisting of the flag, here follows:

U. S. Ram Switzerland, Opposite Memphis, June 7, 1862.

Sir: Yesterday, after the engagement with the rebel fleet had nearly terminated and the gun-boats and one of my rams had passed below, I was informed that a white flag had been raised in the city. I immediately sent my son, Medical Cadet Chas. R. Ellet, ashore with a flag of truce and the following note to the authorities:

"Opposite Memphis, June 6, 1862.

"To the Civil or Military Authorities of Memphis:—

"Gentlemen: I understand that the City of Memphis has surrendered. I therefore send my son with two United States flags, with instructions to raise one upon the Custom House and the other upon the Court House, as evidence of the return of your city to the care and protection of the Constitution

"CHAS. ELLET, JR.,
"Col. Comd'g."

The bearer of the flags and the above note was accompanied by Lieut. Crandall, of the 59th Ill. Regiment, and two men of the boat guard. The following is the reply of the Mayor of the City:

"MAYOR'S OFFICE.

"Memphis, Tenn., Jan. 6, 1862.

"Col Chas. Ellet, Jr., Comd'g. Etc.:-

"Sir: Your note of this date is received and contents noted. The civil authorities of this city are not advised of its surrender to the forces of the United States Government, and our reply to you is simply to state respectfully that we have no forces to oppose the raising of the flags you have directed to be raised over the Custom House and Postoffice.

"Respectfully,

JOHN PARK, Mayor."

On receiving this reply the small party proceeded to the Postoffice to raise the National flag and were there joined by the Mayor. It is proper to say that the conduct of the Mayor and some of the citizens was unexceptionable, but the party was surrounded by an excited crowd using angry words and threatening language. They ascended to the top of the Postoffice and planted the flag, though fired upon several times and stoned by the mob below. Still I believe that this conduct was reprobated by the people of standing in the place. Indeed, many evidences reach me of an extensive Union sentiment at Memphis.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

Hon. E. M. Stanton,

On the day after the battle Col. Ellet sent a request by Lieut. Currie to Commodore Davis for the return of the captured "Little Rebel" to his possession, it having been taken from the care of the men placed in charge by Lt. Col. Ellet when it was captured the day before. Col. Ellet's request expressed his wish to send the "Little Rebel," manned by a new crew, as part of the expedition being planned to proceed down the river.

Com. Davis sent a verbal refusal to deliver the prize, and the matter was the cause of additional irritation to the prostrate sufferer, at whose request a statement of facts was drawn up and signed by eye-witnesses and participants in the capture of the rebel boat. This statement is of historic interest, and is here published for the first time:

(Statement touching the Capture of the Rebel Steamer, "Little Rebel.")

U. S. Ram Switzerland, Opposite Memphis, June 8, 1862.

We saw the "Little Rebel" coming into shore when she was chased in by the Monarch after the crew of the "Queen" had secured the rebel steamer "Gen'l Price," and taken her crew prisoners.

We then continued on to the "Little Rebel," and secured her by lines to the shore, and took three of her crew, who were still on board, prisoners. Then Lieut. Col. Ellet came up in the Dick Fulton and endeavored to pull the "Little Rebel" off the bank, but he found she was too hard on for that small steamer to move. Lieut. Col. Ellet then ordered Peter Brown, the mate of the Queen, to remain on board and hold possession, until he could send more powerful boats to get her off. Ten or fifteen minutes after the Lieut. Col. had left, the Captain of one of the mortar boats came up with two tugs, and stated that he had orders from the Commodore to get that steamer off and tow her up. Mr. Brown, then in charge, surrendered the rebel steamer and the three prisoners to the Commodore's officers, who towed her away, carrying along the rebel life boat, which had been captured down the river by the Dick Fulton, and left alongside the rebel steamer.

PETER BROWN,

2nd Master Queen.

MICHAEL WHALEN,

Steward Queen.

JACOB LAUBER,

1st Engineer Queen.

Col. Ellet closed the incident by addressing the following note to the Commodore, which very clearly presented his view of the subject.

and the justice of his claim to possession and use of the captured boat, which was admirably suited to use as a ram:

U. S. Ram *Switzerland*, Before Memphis, June 10th, 1862.
To Commodore C. H. Davis, Commanding Western Flotilla:

Sir:—I am not in a condition now to press my demand for the "Little Rebel," which was taken by your orders from a guard which I had placed on board of her. I can not, however, forbear from recapitulating the facts.

In your note of the 3rd inst., after receiving my instructions from the War Department, you informed me that my vessels were not under your control and that you are not responsible for their movements.

In the engagement on the 6th inst. one of my vessels acting entirely under my own orders, attacked the "Little Rebel," chased her into shore, butted her slightly, and left her beached. A portion of the crew of my flag-ship, then disabled, who had just secured the rebel steamer "Price" and all her crew, also took possession of the "Little Rebel," fastened her to shore with her own lines, accepted the surrender of the three rebels whom they found on board, and by the order of Lieut. Col. Ellet, remained to guard the prize.

Now, Commodore, it was not from the enemy, but from this little prize crew, that your tugs took this vessel; and I do not ask you to give her to me, as your note assumes, but merely to restore her to me, as she was before she was taken from me. She is mine, Commodore, the spoils of my first, and I fear my last, naval engagement. I may afford hereafter to give her to you, but I can not, until she is restored to my possession, consent to her surrender.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,
 Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

Among the papers of Col. Ellet, preserved with scrupulous care by his family, is the following pencilled dispatch, in his own hand [probably not sent] which presents the matter as he wished, to the authorities at Washington:

Opposite Memphis, June 9.

In the naval engagement before Memphis on the 6th my ram, the *Monarch*, chased the rebel flag-ship, the "Little Rebel," ashore, rammed her as she reached shore and beached her. The crew of another of my rams, the *Queen*, then made the "Little Rebel" fast with lines, took the three men who remained on board prisoners, and took charge of the boat.

Commodore Davis subsequently sent tugs to haul her off, and take her to him, without any notice or message to me, though she was my prize and actually in my possession.

I have twice written to the Commodore to claim my prize, and have been answered in a note received this morning, in these words:

"I regret to be obliged to say that it would not be in my power to give you the *Little Rebel* or any other one of the captured vessels of the rebel Squadron; to do so would interfere with my general plan of operations."

I had intended to give the "*Little Rebel*" and the "*Gen'l Price*" both my prizes, to ambitious and energetic men in my fleet, whom I could in no other way so well gratify and stimulate to action. I do not wish to push my claim farther than to state that the "*Gen'l Price*" and the "*Little Rebel*" are both the prizes of my brown paper rams; and though touched by shot, were not disabled by the fire of the gun-boats. The report to me today is, that the "*Gen'l Price*," which sank after we secured her and all her crew, can not be raised. [Unsigned].

While quick to perceive cowardice or lack of spirit in officers or men under him, and to reprehend such conduct, Col. Ellet was most appreciative of personal bravery, and did not, even in his suffering and prostration, forget the men who had made his great achievement possible. With his own hand he prepared the report and lists following, as a tribute to the gallant men who were with him in the fight:

Off Memphis, June 9, 1863.

To the Secretary of War:

In the naval engagement with the rebel fleet at Memphis on the morning of the 6th inst., the *Queen of the West* and the *Monarch* did such gallant and effective service by passing ahead of the fire of our own gun-boats and capturing two, that I deem it my duty to report the names of most of the parties who were on board those boats, and to specify particularly those who, in my judgment, are most worthy of your notice and commendation.

The names of these parties will be found in the following lists, which I beg leave to submit for your consideration.

I am, sir, respectfully,

Your obed't servant,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.

List of the Officers, Crew and Military Guards who were on board the Steam Ram QUEEN OF THE WEST in the Naval Engagement off Memphis, June 6th, 1862: When that steamer and the *Monarch*, by which the *Queen* was followed and most gallantly supported, ran into and sank three rebel rams and gun-boats and captured two all of whom are reported to the Colonel Commanding to have stood bravely to their posts:

Joseph Ford, 1st Master,

Peter Brown, 2nd Master,

Martin Trimp, 3rd Master,

Henry Bulster, Fireman,

Malvin Jenkins, Fireman,

David Riddle, Fireman.

Alexander Ford, Pilot.	John Ross, Fireman.
R. H. Smith, Pilot.	Allen Stenison, Fireman.
Jos. M. Davis, Pilot.	Joseph Gatewood, Fireman.
Geo. M. Dougherty, Watchman.	Henry Little, Deckhand.
Wm. Curtis, Chief Engineer.	George Urtzel, Deckhand.
Jacob Lauber, 1st Asst. Engineer.	Nelson Mitchell, Deckhand.
John McCullough, 2nd Asst. Engineer.	Wm. Nixon, Deckhand.
John Skelton, Blacksmith.	James S. Nixon, Deckhand.
Thompson Wood, Coppersmith.	Richard Kennedy, Deckhand.
Michael Whelan, Steward.	Levi W. Robinson, Deckhand.
Thos. Hartshorn, Cook.	<i>Military Guard Names.</i>
Joseph Ford, Cabin Boy.	Lieut. James M. Hunter.
Henry Collins, Pantryman.	Peter Light.
Thos. Spencer, Carpenter.	George Flowerboese.
Jas. Morris, Carpenter.	David Gathart.
Wm. Bradley, Fireman.	Chas. Falconer.
Thornton Stewart, Fireman.	George Miffitt.
Barnes Payne, Fireman.	John Bates.
Charles Gunton, Fireman.	Wm. Jackson.
John Williams, Fireman.	Thomas Gordon.

In an engagement of this desperate character, the heaviest responsibility requiring the greatest coolness and determined resolution necessarily falls on the pilots at the wheel, and on the engineers who stand by the side of their engines. I therefore report as worthy of special commendation on this occasion, Alexander Ford, R. H. Smith, the pilots at the wheel of the Queen, and Wm. Curtis, Chief Engineer, Jacob Lauber, 1st Asst. Engineer, and their respective seconds, John McCullough and John Skelton. I also deem it proper to report that Alexander Ford, pilot, Martin Trimp, 2nd mate, Wm. H. Nixon, deckhand, James S. Nixon, deckhand, and Levi W. Robinson, were also volunteers on board the Queen of the West in the attempt to sink a rebel steamer under the guns of Fort Pillow, the 3rd of June.

The military guard under Lieut. Jas. M. Hunter, 63rd Regt. Ill. Vol., on board the Queen, acted with deliberate coolness, gallantly, keeping up an incessant fire upon the enemy's pilots and gunners as long as the vessels were at close quarters.

List of the Officers and Crew and Military Guard on board the Steam Ram MONARCH in the Naval Engagement off Memphis, June 6, 1862, all of whom are reported to the Colonel Commanding to have stood bravely to their posts. Lieut. Col. Ellet, Second in Command of the Fleet:

David M. Dryden, Captain.	Wm. Jackson, Fireman.
Thomas Chippendale, 1st Mate.	Thompson Brown, Fireman.
Thos. F. Collins, Pilot.	Daniel Scott, Fireman.

Chas. M. Jackson, Pilot.
Hiram Lanham, 1st Engineer.
Urban T. Halstead, 1st Asst. Engineer.
Michael Roach, 2nd Asst Engineer.
Augustus M. Marsh, Carpenter.
Chas. McCarty, 1st Steward.
Thos. M. Armstrong, 2nd Steward.
Joseph Thornton, 1st Cook.
Lewis Frew, Watchman.

N. Jackson, Fireman.
John Little, Deckhand.
John Dawson, Deckhand.
Stephen Scott, Deckhand.
Jas. Price, Deckhand.
Geo. F. Williams, Deckhand.
Jacob Miller, Deckhand.
Henry Weist, Deckhand.
Albert Williams, Deckhand.

Names of the Military Guard of the 5th Regt. Ill. Vol. on board the Monarch under command of 1st Sergt. E. W. Bartlett, of Co. I, 59th Regt. Ill. Vol. acting Lieutenant.

Jas. P. Dorman.
John Holland.
Chas. C. Isaacs.
Tobias N. Yoft.
Isaac Fuller.

Gilbert C. Hamilton.
George W. Bailey.
John Sawyer.
John Belaney.
Wm. E. Warren.

On board the Monarch the most distinguished praise is due to Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet, 2nd in command of the fleet. David M. Dryden, the Captain, who himself stood at the wheel with Thomas I. Collins, pilot, and handled his boat in the most intrepid and skillful manner throughout the fight, Hiram Lanham, 1st Engineer, Wilson T. Halstead, 1st. Ass't Engineer, Michael Roach, 2nd Ass't Engineer, acting Lieutenant E. W. Bartlett, and every man under his command, who kept up so hot and so accurate a fire that the enemy could not use the gun on his bow, as the ram approached.

The two privates of the 63rd Ill. Regt., R. W. Groomes and W. W. Jackson, who volunteered to handle the engines of the Queen, on the attack on the rebel steamer at Fort Pillow, had been transferred by the Colonel Commanding to the Switzerland to handle the engines of that boat, after the engineers of the boat, appalled by the dangers before them, desired to be relieved from service.

The Captain of the Switzerland failed to bring that steamer into action before Memphis, and these engineers with other brave men on board the Switzerland were thus deprived of the opportunity to share the honors of the day. But the Colonel Commanding considers their conduct on the evening of the third at Fort Pillow, as deserving of high praise as the conduct of the two engineers of either the Queen or the Monarch, in the engagement at Memphis, and that they should, in justice, be placed on an equal footing with these engineers. So also the conduct of Thomas O'Reilly, the mate of the Fulton, John Little, John Donovan and Peter McAfee, deckhands of the Fulton and George N. Dougherty, Watchman of the Queen, and the pilots, Rowley S. McKay and Alvah W. Hicks, who volunteered to go on

board the *Queen* the night of the 3rd of June, to attack the rebel steamer, under Fort Pillow, should be placed on the same footing as that of any of the parties, in similar station, who were in the engagement at Memphis.

In point of fact, the daring of these brave men who were engaged at Fort Pillow, more than anything else, led to the decisive victory at Memphis.

The failure of the *LANCASTER* to come into action at Memphis was, at the time, the subject of much unfavorable comment, and many of her crew and of the military detachment, on board were loud in their denunciations of the boat's officers. Col. Ellet, despite his condition, entered upon a personal investigation, and left the manuscript of his findings and judgment in the following:

Opposite Memphis, June 9th, 1862.

The Colonel Commanding, after causing an investigation of the circumstances attending the failure of the *Lancaster* to come into the naval action off Memphis on the 6th of June, when all her crew could see the *Queen* of the West followed by the *Monarch*, bearing down on the enemy, has arrived at this conclusion.

That Capt. Wm. Mix exhibited great error of judgment in permitting his pilot to stand anywhere but at the wheel at that time, and trusting the entire steering of the steamer to a young man of much less experience than the pilot, and who had only the night before entered service on his boat.

To this cause the Colonel Commanding attributes much of the confusion that prevailed on the deck of the *Lancaster*, when Captain Mix ordered the pilot to go ahead, and to this confusion he also attributes the error of the only man at the wheel to give the proper signals to the engineers, and the consequent backing of the boat, when she should have been driving down upon the rebel fleet.

To this extent blame attaches strongly to Capt. Mix; but yet, in expressing this opinion, it is due to that officer to say, that the confidence of the Colonel Commanding in Capt. Mix's integrity, candor and skill and other excellent qualities, is unabated, and he believes that the *Lancaster*, with her present brave crew and captain, will vindicate his opinion, and her own good qualities on the next opportunity which, if one should not offer, will be immediately sought for.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.

The following is a supplemental Report of incidents of the naval engagement at Memphis written by Col. Ellet, but remaining unsigned:

U. S. Steamer Ram Switzerland, June 10, 1862.

The rebel boats were all rams provided with guns so as to serve both as rams and gun-boats. My boats were not provided with guns. The rebel boats were very heavily plated with railroad iron. My boats were without iron plating and had been spoken of in ridicule as the "brown paper rams." The "Gen'l Lovell," the boat which was first struck by the Queen, had a crew of 86 men, of whom only 18 are said to have been saved. The "Gen'l Price," another rebel boat which also came into collision with the Queen and was disabled, had a crew of 18 men, according to the count made by the crew of the Queen to whom they surrendered. The Queen and the Monarch together struck five boats, one of which was sunk simultaneously, another, in a few minutes; a third floated long enough to be towed to shore by the boat that struck her; a fourth, the "Gen'l Price," sank very slowly and it was at first supposed could be easily raised. The fifth was chased to the shore by the Monarch, and received but a slight blow and will therefore be saved. These facts go to show that the ram fighting and prizes are scarcely compatible. The boiler of the rebel boats so far as we have had a chance to see are placed below decks and the hulls are consequently weak. The boilers of our rams were not covered, and their hulls therefore could be made as strong for ramming as we could desire.

[Unsigned].

Although suffering greatly from his wound the ram fleet Commander was intent upon further aggressive operations, and proposed a joint expedition to proceed down the river. His dispatch to the war office tells of this plan:

Opposite Memphis, June 11, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:

The expedition which I proposed to make in conjunction with the gun-boats has been delayed. It is now proposed to set out tomorrow, the Commodore contributing two gun-boats, 1 three rams and a small tug. The destination of the expedition is up White River, to co-operate with Gen'l Curtis and endeavor to capture some rebel gun-boats which Commodore Davis supposes to be there. I can not spare Lieut. Col. Ellet for this expedition, and shall place that portion of it which I contribute under command of Lieut. George E. Currie, of the 59th Ill., who has not yet had a chance to do much, but who, I feel sure, with opportunity, will justify my confidence.

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.

From the War Secretary, after receiving favorable reports as to the condition of Ellet's wound.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, June 13, 1862.

Col. Chas. Ellet, Jr., Commander Ram Fleet opposite Memphis:—

The appointment of Dr. Roberts as Fleet Surgeon and Dr. Lawrence, assistant, have been made and forwarded to you by mail via Cairo. I am glad to learn that you are not entirely disabled, and hope you may be able to give the finishing stroke to the enemy at Vicksburg. Please send me by mail a full description of the vessels composing your fleet, its armament, force, equipment, and where you prepared it and the cost, suitable for a report to Congress.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

There is a melancholy interest in the following communications, sent by the undaunted Commander in the last days of his service:

U. S. Steamer Switzerland, before Memphis, June 15, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

Sir: I have received your dispatch informing me of your appointment of Dr. Roberts as Surgeon and Dr. Lawrence as Assistant Surgeon of my fleet, and requesting a detailed report concerning the rams for the last few days. After receiving my wound my mind was not capable of transacting business. Since then great nervous prostration with pain and fever have rendered me entirely incapable of mental labor. I now have measles super-added. I will prepare the report you ask for as soon as I am able to dictate it, which I hope will be in the course of two or three days. I did not send a detachment to White River to act in conjunction with the gun-boats, as Commodore Davis requested. Brown, the commander, was not willing to receive my co-operation unless I placed my vessels under the command of one of his officers. This, of course, I could not consent to do. Our success at Memphis, was by acting independently. Mr. Brooks has arrived with supplies for my fleet.

Respectfully,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Commanding Ram Fleet.

U. S. Steamer Ram Switzerland, Memphis, June 16, 1862.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Sec'y of War:—

Sir: Mrs. Ellet and my daughter joined me here yesterday. I can not but suppose from your kindness to Mrs. Ellet, telling her that I would be relieved, that you will approve of the temporary transfer of the chief command of my fleet to my brother, Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet. The great prostration of my system points I fear to slow recovery. I can do nothing here but lie in my bed and suffer. I feel deeply the responsibility of transferring this fleet to any one. Two weeks ago a demoralization proceeding wholly from cow-

ardice, began to agitate the fleet. My attack on the rebel steamer at Fort Pillow introduced a more wholesome state of feeling. The crew that left the *Queen of the West* and allowed volunteers to take their places came to me and expressed their humiliation and begged me to give them another chance, promising never to fail me again. It is that same crew that fulfilled so well at Memphis. There is now a most excellent spirit prevailing, and a desire on the part of those who declined or had no opportunity to go into action to have their share of fame and approbation. Whether their confidence, amongst such a heterogenous material, can be transferred to another is to be tested. The conspicuous part acted by the Lieutenant Colonel at Memphis will make it easier for him to command than any one else. I do not propose to leave Lieut. Col. Ellet any instructions. His own judgment will be a better guide to him than mine.

Respectfully yours,

CHAS. ELLET, JR.,

Col. Comd'g.

The following is the (unfinished) report, requested by Mr. Stanton. It bears date of June 11, but, was added to and corrected at intervals, during all the conscious days of his life—being left unsigned. It contains many additional details, including the circumstances of receiving his wound:

Naval Engagement off Memphis, Tenn., and Occupation of that City by Union Forces. Report of Col. Chas. Ellet, Jr.

Opposite Memphis, June 11, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:—

Sir:—I have the honor to report the details of the naval engagement of the 6th inst. off Memphis, in which two of the rams of my fleet participated. A reconnoissance at Fort Pillow on the evening of the 4th made by two of my steamers, satisfied me that the fort was evacuated. I approached with the *Queen of the West* close enough to invite the fire of the rebel guns, but received no shot, while very considerable smoke and flames indicated the burning of the property of the enemy. Before daylight Lieut. Col. Ellet, at his own suggestion, went in a yawl with a small boat's crew down to the fort, found it deserted and planted the stars and stripes there. I followed almost simultaneously with a portion of my fleet. After a brief delay I proceeded with three vessels to Randolph and sent Lieut. Col. Ellet ashore with a flag of truce. He there ascertained that the rebel forces had been hastily withdrawn the night before, after destroying their artillery, burning a good deal of cotton and doing whatever mischief they could in the short time they could venture to remain. Later in the day the gun-boats under Commodore Davis moved down the Mississippi toward Memphis, while I collected my fleet and

passed the night on the Tennessee shore some eighteen miles above Memphis. Having seen the rebel fleet abandon a position whence they could choose their own time of attack with Fort Pillow to fall back upon, I had no expectation that they would make a stand at Memphis, which was represented to be entirely unfortified. Nevertheless I left the shore at daybreak, on the morning of the 5th (6th) keeping four of my strongest steamers in the advance, prepared for any emergency. On approaching Memphis I found the gun-boats under Commodore Davis anchored across the channel. I accordingly rounded to, with the Queen, (my flag-ship) and made fast to the Arkansas shore, with the intention of conferring with Commodore Davis and collecting information preparatory to the next movement. But my flag-ship had been but a few minutes secured to the bank, before a shot which seemed to pass over her, announced the presence of the enemy. I immediately ordered the lines to be cast off, signified to Lieut. Col. Elliot on the Monarch, whose place was next in order to follow, hoisted the flag which was the signal I had prescribed for going into action, rounded to, with head down stream, and passing between the gun-boats, which were then returning the enemy's fire with considerable vivacity bore down upon the enemy expecting to be followed by the Monarch, the Lancaster and the Switzerland in order. I found the rebel gun-boats, all of which were rams armed with guns, heading boldly up stream toward our fleet while the levee at Memphis was crowded with spectators. I directed my attack upon two rebel rams which were about the middle of the river, very close together and supported by a third a little in their rear and a little nearer to the Memphis shore. These two rams held their way so steadily, pointing their stems directly upon the stem of the Queen that it was impossible for me to direct the pilots between whom I had taken my stand, upon which to direct our shock. But as the distance between us and the enemy, short at first, became dangerously small, the two rebel boats apparently quailing before the approaching collision, began first to back water and then to turn, thus presenting their broadsides to my attack. It was impossible to choose between these boats which to attack, for there was still a third ram within supporting distance to which I would be exposed, if I struck the second, while the second would be sure to reach me, if I selected the first. My speed was high, time was short, and the forward rebel presented rather the fairer mark, I selected her. The pilots now animated by the deep interest of the scene brought the prepared bow of the Queen of the West against the broadside of the rebel ram just forward of the wheel-house. The crash was terrific. Everything loose about the Queen—some tables, pantry-ware, and a half eaten breakfast—were overthrown and broken by the shock. The hull of the rebel steamer was crushed in, her chimneys surged over as if they were going to fall over on the bow of the Queen. Many of her crew, I have been told, leaped overboard. Yet the rebel wreck, in consequence of the continued motion of the Queen, still clung to her bow. Before the collision the rebel made a feeble effort to use her guns, and succeeded in firing a charge

of grape and canister, which was lost in the water. In less than half a minute from the moment of collision and before the Queen could clear herself from the wreck, she was herself struck by another rebel steamer on her larboard wheel-house. This blow broke her tiller rope, crushed in her wheel and a portion of her hull, and left her nearly helpless. All this, from the time of leaving the shore and passing the gun-boat and the disabling of my flag-ship I do not think occupied over seven or eight minutes. The moment the Queen was herself struck, I left the pilot house and went out on deck, when I was instantly disabled by one of a number of shots from a rebel steamer, which seemed to have come into accidental collision with the Queen, and was at that moment drifting by her, but still in contact with her. From the moment of the collision of the Queen with the rebel steamer, to the time when I was brought to her deck, could not have exceeded one minute, yet I saw from her deck the surface of the Mississippi strewn with the fragments of the rebel vessel. While these things were occurring the Monarch, Lieut Col. Elliot commanding, and Captain Dryden, Master, having followed the Queen and passed below our own gun-boats, directed her shock upon the rebel ram immediately following the one that struck the Queen, and sank her. The blow of the Monarch was so severe that piles of furniture were precipitated from the rebel steamer upon the fore-castle of the Monarch, and were found in large quantities after the action. Many versions differing from each other entirely, have been given by eye witnesses of these occurrences, who stood in plain view on the levee at Memphis, in our own gun-boats, and on the Arkansas shore. These discrepancies are attributable to the fact that there were three rebel rams and two of our own mingled together, and crashing against each other, and that other rebel steamers were coming up, close at hand. In this confusion the different boats were mistaken for others, and the steamer struck by the Queen disappeared from view beneath the surface of the river. This uncertainty of view was doubtless increased by the accumulation of smoke from the chimneys of so many boats and the fire from our own gun-boats. The general impression was, that it was the Queen that went down and not the boat she struck. After being disabled the Queen worked herself to the Arkansas shore with only one wheel, and without a rudder. The disabled rebel (Sumpter) which had come in collision with the Queen, worked herself in to shore, near the same place, and I sent a portion of the crew of the Queen, at their own solicitation, to take the rebel and secure her crew as prisoners. Our hope at first was to save this rebel gun-boat, which is reported to be a very fine vessel, but she soon settled; but though Commodore Davis has sent a force to raise her, success, I understand, is regarded as doubtful.

[Author's Note. The vessel last referred to was the "Gen. Price" not the "Sumpter."]]

Before closing the story of this engagement it is deemed proper to introduce a few brief extracts from reports of officers not connected

with the Ram Fleet, but eye-witnesses and participants in the battle, and competent to speak advisedly on the part taken by the new arm of the service:

Flag Officer C. H. Davis commanding the gunboats in this action, in the course of his report to the Secretary of the Navy, (in which he practically assumes the whole credit of the victory) makes his allusion to rams: "I was ably supported by the ram fleet under Col. Ellet, who was conspicuous for gallantry, and is seriously, but not dangerously, wounded." Writing of the engagement later, Commodore Davis (as quoted in Harpers' History of the Great Rebellion, p. 436) said: "While the engagement was going on in this manner, 'two vessels of the ram fleet, under command of Colonel Ellet, steamed 'rapidly by us, and ran boldly into the enemy's line. Several conflicts had taken place between the rams, before the gunboats, led by 'the BEXTON, moving at a slower rate, could arrive at the closest quarters. In the meantime, however, the firing from the gunboats was 'continuous, and exceedingly well directed. The 'Gen. Beauregard' 'and 'Little Rebel' were struck in the boilers and blown up. The 'ram QUEEN OF THE WEST, which Col. Ellet commanded in person, 'encountered with full power the rebel steamer Gen. 'Lovell,' and 'sank her, but in so doing, sustained pretty serious damage. Up to 'this time the rebel fleet had maintained its position, and used its 'guns, with great spirit. These disasters compelled the remaining 'vessels to resort to their superiority in speed, as the only means of 'safety. A running fight took place, which lasted nearly an hour, 'and carried us ten miles below the city. The attack made by the two 'rams under Col. Ellet, which took place before the flotilla closed in 'with the enemy, was bold and successful." Captain Walke, commanding the *Essex*, said in his report: "The attack was promptly met by 'two of our ram squadron, the QUEEN OF THE WEST, Col. Charles 'Ellet, and the MONARCH, Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet, which fearlessly 'dashed ahead of our gunboats, ran for the enemy's fleet, and at the 'first plunge succeeded in sinking one vessel, and disabling another." "Senior Capt. J. E. Montgomery, commanding the rebel fleet in that engagement, and witnessing it from the deck of his own vessel (the "Little Rebel") says in his report (which is mainly occupied with the ram features of the fight, and quite inaccurate in its mention of the

names of Federal vessels) "As Capt. Delaney was directing his boat "[Loyell]" at one of the Federal rams, one of his engines got out of order, and his boat became unmanageable. The Federal ram QUEEN OF THE WEST then struck his boat amid ships with disastrous effect. "The next moment his boat was again struck by the Federal ram MOXARCH, and was sunk. . . . The "Sumpter" (Capt. Lamb) struck "the QUEEN OF THE WEST and sunk her. . . . The "Gen. Price" (Capt. Henthorne). . . . gave chase to the Federal ram (?) Eastport "[MOXARCH] and the "Gen. Beauregard" (Capt. Hunt) was at the "same time coming down the river after the same boat. The Eastport "[MOXARCH] backed out from between our boats before they could "reach her, she being much more easily wielded, which caused the "Gen. Beauregard" to run into the "Gen. Price's" wheel, thereby disabling her. Whilst they were thus entangled they were run into and "sunk by a reinforcement of Federal rams."

From the foregoing it is apparent that the gallant Confederate commander, whose latest observations must have been taken as he was scrambling overboard from his own boat, was much impressed with the work of the two Federal rams that day, for he mentions no less than four, and then sees a "reinforcement of rams," beside. The impressions of the two fleet commanders, as quoted above, concerning the effective fighting qualities of Ellet's rams, differed somewhat, but that was probably owing to the smoke and their points of view.

One of the pilots of the gunboat *Carondelet* writing immediately after the fight was over, giving an account of it for publication in a leading Northern journal, says: "The first shot was fired by the rebels shortly after 5 o'clock. The gunboat fleet remained stationary, "firing stern guns, till the ram QUEEN OF THE WEST, followed by the "ram MOXARCH, passed down to attack. We immediately followed, "but the time necessarily consumed in getting around, head down the "stream together with the greater speed of the rams, left us far behind. "The much decried "rotten and worthless steamboat" rams went in "gallantly, sinking two of the rebel boats, and throwing the rest into "confusion, so as to allow the gunboats to get pretty near before they "[the rebels] started off on the grand skedaddle. We pursued as fast "as possible firing on them till they all surrendered but one, which, "being much faster than we were, escaped. . . . The *Carondelet* was

"struck but once, by a solid shot, near her stern, which glanced over the boat, doing but little damage to her and slightly wounding two men." This officer had a good chance to see what took place, but his frank way of telling it, was hardly up to the right mark for an "official report" of the action.

Gen. Jeff. Thompson, in command at Memphis, had, during the previous day, directed the departure of his troops for Grenada, and had tarried to witness the gunboat fight, which the plucky Montgomery had determined to give the Yankee fleet. He reported to General Beauregard, after the affair was over and himself at safe distance from the scene, what he witnessed that morning, after his "rude awakening" at early dawn, by the report that Federal fleet was coming in sight. His summing up in these words is worthy a place in this history: "I saw a large portion of the engagement from the river banks, and am sorry to say that in my opinion many of our boats were handled badly, or the plan of battle was very faulty. The enemy's rams did most of the execution, and were handled more adroitly than ours—I think however, entirely owing to the fact that the guns and sharpshooters of the enemy were constantly employed, while we were almost without either."

The following graphic account of this engagement, from the pen of W. F. Warren, a participant—one of the eleven sharpshooters on the *MONARCH*—is probably as nearly accurate as has ever been given:

LIEUT. WARREN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLE BEFORE MEMPHIS.

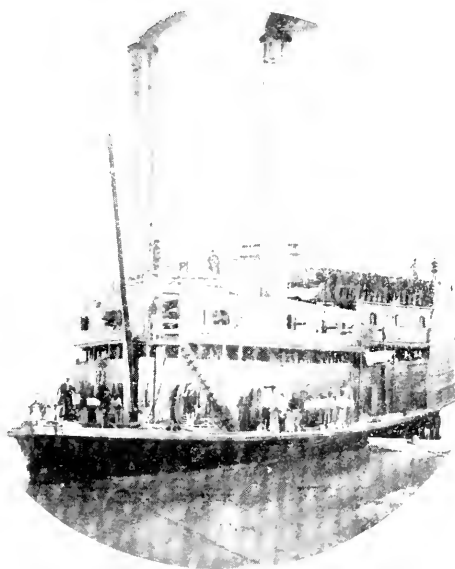
"Just about sunrise, the "Little Rebel" moved forward toward our gunboats and fired the first shot, the signal of battle. Instantly from both fleets came the answering boom of a cannon. I watched the effect on Col. Charles Ellet, who stood on the hurricane deck of *The QUEEN*; for well I knew that the supreme moment of his life as a patriot had come. The work on which he had ventured all was now to be tested; and with the enthusiasm born of confidence, he accepted the opportunity. Scarcely had the echo of the first gun died away, when the grand old man, for such he was, full of vigor and dauntless courage, took off his hat and swinging it about his head, shouted to his brother on the *MONARCH*: "Come on!" Right grandly the *QUEEN* backed off from the shore and moved out in rear of our

gunboats. Passing two and turning down between the second and the flagship *Benton*, she made straight for the Confederate fleet, now more than a mile away. The *MOXARCH* followed perhaps 300 yards behind. As we passed the *Benton*, her crew cheered lustily, while her broadsides thundered in quick succession. All other sights and sounds now paled to insignificance as we sped onward toward the advancing rebel fleet. None but the builder of our rams knew their real power, so the rest of us could but wonder if they would stand the shock. It would be a fearful test of engineering skill, and one or the other we knew must go down. The boys knew there would be no flinching on our side, for braver men than the Ellets and the picked sharpshooters on those rams, never drew sword, or fired carbine. On rushed the *QUEEN* with ever increasing speed, while we of the *MOXARCH*, with no long range guns to occupy our time, could only watch the result. Col. Ellet aimed his boat at the "Gen. Lovell," a vessel of about her size; but the wary Confederate dare not risk the onset, and therefore turned to escape the blow. This enabled the *QUEEN* to strike her directly amidships, and so well directed and terrible was the blow that the "Lovell" was almost cut in two, and sank in perhaps five minutes. The *QUEEN* seemed for a moment to be fairly wedged into her antagonist, and before she could recover herself, another Confederate ram dashed into her larboard wheel, completely crushing it, but doing her no farther damage. This was accomplished in much less time than I have occupied in telling it; in fact, so quickly, that the *MOXARCH* not more than 400 yards in rear of the *QUEEN*, was still 200 yards from the nearest Confederate ram, though running at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Instantly we realized that our one boat was now left to contend with six of her own size, beside the "Little Rebel," and all these carrying heavy guns, while our armament was only eleven sharpshooters, for the Union gunboats must still have been full three-fourths of a mile away. The Confederates had seen the folly of trying to dodge our blows, and so the "Gen. Beauregard" met us right royally. The two large ships under full headway, rushed upon each other, utterly reckless of the fact that one or both must go to the bottom. It was an awful moment! Whether intentionally or not they did not strike head on, but a little quartering. There was a fearful prolonged crash, and

“then a creaking and groaning of timbers, and the vessels had passed each other. The good *Moxaren* careened heavily from side to side, as a lion might shake his mane, but soon righted up, perfectly unharmed, while her antagonist, with bow crushed in and one wheel totally destroyed, was rapidly and surely sinking. The shock had stopped our headway, and demoralized our engineers a little, leaving us momentarily helpless in the center of the Confederate fleet. Instantly the “*Gen. Bragg*,” the largest of their rams (formerly a Gulf steamer), headed for our larboard stern, and as she approached a 32 pound parrott gun, standing on her bow, was charged and aimed at the *Moxaren*’s boilers; but our sharpshooters made it so hot for the gunners that they fled to cover without firing. At the same instant the “*Gen. Price*” charged upon our starboard bow. It seemed as if we would certainly be crushed between these two rams. But their pilot houses were not protected, and our sharpshooters so effectually played upon them that the pilots lost their control of their boats. The “*Price*” turned to the left, missing us perhaps 20 feet; while the “*Bragg*” only grazed the *Moxaren*’s stern, knocking off a little of the guard, and passing, ran into the “*Price*,” inflicting a damaging blow. The *Moxaren* thus relieved, circled to the left to get headway and position, and coming up struck the “*Price*,” completing her overthrow and causing her to sink rapidly. We then circled to the left again for headway and as we came around the “*Little Rebel*,” whose commander had given up the day for lost, was making for the western shore with all speed. The *Moxaren* gave chase and just as the “*Little Rebel*” touched the shore, struck her in the stern, beaching her half her length; thus inadvertently helping Commodore Montgomery and his men to escape by putting the bow of his boat within a jump of the bushes. Some of her escaping crew, however, were stopped and ordered back onto their boat as prisoners. Col. A. W. Ellet knowing that this boat was safe, and rightfully his prize, did not wait to secure even the exquisitely beautiful flag that waved at her mast, but turned at once to aid in completing the victory. Up to the moment we gave chase to the “*Little Rebel*,” I had been too busy to notice our gunboats, but as we passed in this chase they were just at hand, firing rapidly and vigorously, pursuing the now retreating remnant of the Confederate fleet. As we joined in

"the pursuit, the crew of the "Beauregard" hailed us with piteous cries to take them from their sinking ship. We did so; also securing their battle flags and trying ineffectually to tow the vessel to shallow water. As we rounded the point below, the "Jeff Thompson" was seen enveloped in flames against the western shore. A little farther down the "Sumpter" was run ashore, set on fire, and abandoned. Still further down was the "Bragg" in similar condition; but our gunboat men reached the last two in time to extinguish the flames and save the ships. Just why these three ships were forsaken by their owners I never learned, for the fact of their landing in good shape indicated that their machinery was still intact, and they were far swifter than our gunboats. Doubtless it was thought too terribly risky to receive the well-directed fire of our gunboats while running to get out of range. The "Gen. Van Dorn" alone took the risk and made her escape. The *Moxam* followed her thirty-five miles, but anxiety about his brother, and the hopelessness of a stern chase, with the enemy out of sight, induced her commander to return."

Col. Ellet's wound in the knee, received while he was exposed to plain view, on the boiler deck of his vessel, proved to be more serious



**THE SWITZERLAND, Col. Ellet's Flagship,
On which he was taken North, Dying of his wound, enroute.**

than was at first thought, and in the constant stress of the time he so rapidly declined in strength that at no time was amputation deemed expedient. For the greater comfort of the patient he had been removed to the SWITZERLAND, from which his later correspondence was dated. His condition obliged him to relinquish command to his brother, on the 16th, and the SWITZERLAND was at once started North. Meantime his wife and oldest daughter, accompanied by Mrs. A. W. Ellet, and Dr. E. C. Ellet, of Bunker Hill, Ill., had arrived and the party, with surgeon Robarts devoted themselves to the care of the wounded Commander, as they steamed northward. But he continued to sink away, and expired, as the boat neared the wharf at Cairo, on the morning of June 21. Col. Ellet's remains were taken to Philadelphia, where they lay in state, under Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, and were viewed by many thousands of citizens. A large military funeral occurred on the 28th, and all that was mortal of this distinguished patriot, was laid to rest in the burial lot of the family, in Laurel Hill Cemetery. It is mentioned here, to emphasize the cost of the sacrifice of this noble life, that the stricken wife sank under the shock of his death, and a few days later was buried in the same grave.




CHAPTER III



June-August, 1862

The New Commander Proceeds Down to Vicksburg, Communicates With Farragut, Reconnoissance Up the Yazoo Causes Rebels to Burn Their Boats Below the Raft, Farragut Runs the Batteries, Joint Patrol on Yazoo, Descent of the Arkansas, She Runs the Gauntlet of Fire, Disaster to the Lancaster from a Shot in Her Steam Drum, Attempt of the Queen to Destroy Her Under the Guns of Vicksburg, Reports and Criticisms,—Story of the Rebel Ram, Farragut's Departure, Sickness in Both Fleets Followed by Retirement to Helena, Correspondence of Quartermaster Brooks, Lioness Encounters Guerrilla Battery Near Greenville.

The command of the Ram Fleet now devolved upon Lieut. Col. Alfred W. Ellet, an officer of the same brave and indomitable spirit as his brother, with the advantage of some military training and experience, and fully impressed with the possibilities of the ram as an engine of war. The officers and men who came with him, to man the fleet, had fully proven their bravery, and justified him in the expectation of efficiency in whatever service might be before them. While he was planning a movement southward the following dispatch was received from Mr. Stanton:

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, D. C., June 20, 1862.

Col. Alfred W. Ellet, Commanding Ram Fleet:

I regret that your brother's illness deprives the government of his skillful and gallant services, but have confidence that you will supply his place better than any one else. You will observe that by his (the President's) instructions the Ram Fleet was placed under the general command of the commander of the gun-boat squadron. The President desires you to consider yourself in the same position, believing that co-operative action will be more

likely to produce good results than independent action, and that the commander of the gun-boats should have chief command. I shall be glad to have full and frequent reports from you.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

The new Commander was impatient to move on to the front, believing that in the demoralized condition of the enemy, little or no resistance would be met, and accordingly, acting on his own responsibility he took the five rams available, the *MOXARCH*, *LANCASTER*, *LIONESS*, *MIXGO* and *FULTON*, and started down the river, this was the 19th of June. The fleet anchored the first night at the mouth of St. Francois river, 8 miles below Memphis, and next morning the *FULTON* and *LANCASTER* proceeded up that stream. No craft of any kind were found, except now and then the remains of a cotton barge that had been burned, and after forty or fifty miles journey up that stream the fleet returned to the Mississippi, and proceeded down anchoring for the second night opposite Helena. At several landing points during the day Union refugees from Arkansas conscription were taken aboard, and thus the commander learned of the location and movements of the enemy in that part of the field. The river was being ferried at many points by men in skiffs and on rafts escaping from the brutal Arkansas conscription then being most vigorously enforced, in the effort to stay the progress of the Army of General Curtis southward through that State. As the fleet proceeded down the river the plantations were found abandoned, and only a few negroes here and there visible. Now and then a glimpse was had of a squad of mounted men belonging to the state constabulary, engaged in hunting fugitives from conscription, who were endeavoring to make their way toward Memphis, or the Union lines.

The fleet reached the mouth of White river at dusk June 21, and there tied up for the night.

A division of Davis' fleet had preceded the rams to this point, and ascended the White river some little distance, but finding no enemy had returned, and were now here at anchor. Several barges of coal and cattle were brought down in tow by the rams *LIONESS* and *MIXGO*. At this point quite a number of the fugitives above referred to offered themselves for service in the fleet, and were accepted, also a

number of negroes were taken on to assist the crews, and for officers' servants. Leaving White River on the morning of the 22d, the fleet moved on down the Mississippi without incident, arriving toward evening, and landing for the night, at Egg Point, Miss. Here a large number of negroes gathered along the banks, and viewed the boats and talked freely of their masters, and what was going on in their vicinity. From them it was learned that the fleeing "Van Dorn" had created great consternation, on her down trip, two weeks before, by the news she imparted at the points touched, of the battle and disaster at Memphis, and of her own marvelous escape from the Yankee rams. From the whites who were willing to talk, it was learned that the retreat for rebel river craft, which had entirely disappeared from the Mississippi, was up the Yazoo. That there were no gunboats or steamboats at, or above, Vicksburg, and no batteries on the river above that point. Early on the morning of the 23d the fleet moved on from Egg Point, and were steaming down at a good rate, when a distress signal from the *FULROX*, far in the rear, brought the fleet to a halt. It was found that that boat had burned a boiler, and must be cooled and repaired before she could proceed. So the fleet lay to at Island 97, about 40 miles from Vicksburg, while the *FULROX*'s boilers were repaired. During the wait at this place, smoke was observed in the distance below, and preparations were made for another ram fight, should it prove to be a gunboat or a fleet of them, coming to the attack. But after a few hours, the direction of the smoke, changing, enabled the river men to determine that it was from some craft moving over in the Yazoo, at no great distance across by land. Col. Ellet in the *MONARCH*, dropped down some miles below the Island, as a precaution against surprise, and to assure himself as to the approach of an enemy. Having no guns, or armament of any sort, he wanted to risk no encounter with a battery or gunboat, where his rams could not have an equal chance. He had expected that some of the gunboats of Davis' fleet would follow on down the river. But in this he reckoned on an independence of action unknown in naval usage. As soon as the *FULROX* was ready to move, Ellet decided to push on to the vicinity of Vicksburg, with his rams alone, but thought it prudent to halt the large and valuable tow at a secure place, and go forward with the unincumbered boats. Accordingly the *LIONESS* and *MIXCO* were

ordered to remain with, and guard the barges, at Paw Paw Island (No. 103), and with the other three, the *FULTON*, of lightest draft in advance, they cautiously proceeded, with the *LANCASTER* and *MONARCH* at half mile distances, in the direction of Vicksburg. A few hours run brought them down to the mouth of the Yazoo, and to the first incident of importance since leaving Memphis. The *FULTON* came up with a lone man pulling a skiff, and took him aboard. He was a German, from Vicksburg, and said he was for the Union. He had (he said) been taking two rebel officers, away from Vicksburg, who were deserting, and probably seeking to get to their homes by stealth. Col. Ellet questioned him closely, and learned of the situation above and below the city, and of the important fact that Farragut's fleet had just arrived below, and was expected to attack the place in a day or two. From him it was also learned that the rebels had one strong gunboat, called the "Arkansas," up the Yazoo, and others were being built, also that a good many transports had been taken up there, and hidden in the upper river, and the Sunflower.

Ellet was just then most interested in the news of Farragut's fleet, and learning that the distance across the neck was only four or five miles, to where Farragut's boats lay, and the informant expressing his willingness to guide a party if sent, he at once determined to communicate with the Admiral. Accordingly he effected a landing in the great bend above Vicksburg, and at 3 in the afternoon dispatched a volunteer party of three young men, soldiers of his old company, with Cadet Ellet, son of the late Fleet Commander, to go, in citizens clothing, with the German guide, and endeavor to reach the Federal fleet below.

Further authentic particulars of this perilous undertaking, with the names of those engaged in it, are contained in the correspondence following:

Steam Ram *Monarch*, Above Vicksburg, June 25, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.:—

I arrived above Vicksburg yesterday afternoon, and immediately dispatched a party of four young men who volunteered to carry a communication to Commodore Farragut, viz.: Medical Cadet Chas. R. Ellet, commanding party; Sergeant E. W. Bartlett, my son, Edward C. Ellet, and W. F. Warren, after a most arduous and dangerous march through swamps and sloughs in some cases waist deep and passing many of the enemy's pickets,

succeeded in reaching the fleet and delivering my letter to Commodore Farragut in person, and upon their return brought me the following reply: "I have "to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 21th inst., by the "hands of your Medical Cadet Ellet. I am highly gratified to find you in "this vicinity, as you may render most effective service by looking after and "breaking up the communication between the Yazoo River and Vicksburg. "As the young gentleman informs me that your vessels are not well calculated for attacking the forts, they can be of no use to us in the fight about "to take place and for which I think we are abundantly strong. If Commodore Davis's iron-clad gun-boats could be present they would add greatly to "the chances of success without much loss of life which is always desirable "in such cases. If you can communicate to him that the affair will come off "in a day or two you will greatly oblige me. Please accept my thanks for "your kindness in making this successful effort to communicate with me, and "my high appreciation of the young gentlemen's enterprise and daring character in undertaking the service which thus far he has perfected so well."

I can not speak too highly of the courage and good judgment displayed by the four young men who volunteered upon this dangerous and most laborious service, which through all the many difficulties they encountered they succeeded in carrying through successfully. I have only to add that from Memphis to this point I have encountered no obstacle. The river was entirely unobstructed. I shall for the present confine my attention to the enemy's gun-boats and rams, said to be up the Yazoo River, and cut off their communication with Vicksburg. I have apprehensions that I may not be able to get up the river to where they are said to be, but will make the attempt unless the water is too shallow. In conformity with Commodore Farragut's express desire I have communicated his wish to Flag Officer Davis in a dispatch today in his own words. I forwarded the dispatch by tender DICK FULTON.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

An interesting note of congratulation from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of State, based no doubt upon the foregoing, and bearing date 7 p. m., June 30, is found among the published records, containing this sentence: "We have news from Vicksburg. Farragut and Ellet's Ram Fleet are there, acting together. The Mississippi is clear from Memphis to Vicksburg, and we shall soon have that." How characteristic of the great War Secretary, who always looked on the bright side, and anticipated success in every movement, and victory in every battle! Alas! More than a year of the great conflict, with its alternate victories and defeats—its failures, and successes,

with all the cost, in suffering and destruction—the full dread penalty of war—must elapse before that note of exultation should be realized in the surrender of the stronghold of Vicksburg.

Meantime the land force, under Brig. Gen. Thomas Williams, co-operating with Farragut, had arrived from Baton Rouge, by transports, and landed opposite the lower part of the city, followed by Porter's mortar boats, which were a part of Farragut's Gulf Squadron. These at once moved up, within range of the city, and opened their desultory fire. As soon as Gen. Williams' forces were in camp his engineers at once began work on the "cut-off" canal across the neck, (a project suggested beforehand in instructions, from Washington) and he soon had a large force of "contrabands" employed on the work.

The message sent by the dispatch boat, to meet Commodore Davis, was as follows:

Steam Ram Monarch, Above Vicksburg, June 25, 1862.

Sir: I have the pleasure to inform you that I obtained today a communication from Commodore Farragut, in which the following passage, referring to his intended attack on Vicksburg:

"If Commodore Davis's ironclad gun-boats could be present, they would add greatly to the chance of success without much loss of life, which is always desirable in such cases. If you can communicate with him that the affair will come off in a day or two, you will greatly oblige me."

I take great pleasure in conveying to you this message and trust that it may reach you in time to enable you to participate in the approaching contest.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

C. H. Davis, Flag-Officer Commanding Gun-boat Flotilla.

At this date, the archives disclose a reply from the Secretary to General Halleck, at Corinth relating to, and throwing strong light upon the official relations of the gunboats to the army, and indicating the views of that officer on the subject. It may here be remarked that Mr. Stanton succeeded in getting Ellet's ram fleet excepted from transfer to the Navy along with the gunboats, but the President had his way in keeping it under general control of the Naval Commander. Here is the dispatch:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., June 27, 1862.

Major General Halleck, Corinth:—

No change has been made in the order respecting your gun-boats that I am aware of. Since I came into this department an Act of Congress has transferred them to the Navy Department. No report was ever made to this Department by the Commander of the gun-boats. When Mr. Ellet had his steam rams ready he wanted to act under your orders or the orders of this Department, and I requested the President's permission so to direct, but he thought they should be under the command of the officer commanding the gun-boats, and instructions were given accordingly. I have always thought you should have command of the gun-boats, and will endeavor to procure an order to that effect.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

On the 26th, Col. Ellet with the other two rams, pursuant to the suggestions from Farragut, proceeded on a reconnoitering expedition, up the Yazoo. His report to the War Secretary, two days later, gives particulars of this trip, and the results, as he saw them. In the official report of the Confederate Commander of the River Defense Fleet (made a few days later from Mobile) substantially the same facts are stated, thus verifying their historical accuracy.

Ellet's report here follows:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, Above Vicksburg, June 28, 1862.*Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:—*

Since my dispatch informing you that I had communicated with Flag-officer Farragut I have been able to maintain constant intercourse with his fleet through the active energy of General Williams, who holds possession of the neck of land between the two fleets. On the 26th inst. I went up the Yazoo River with two rams, the *MONARCH* and *LANCASTER* the latter under command of Medical Cadet Chas. R. Ellet. I proceeded about 65 miles to a point where the river is obstructed by a raft built by the enemy, and protected by four guns in battery. My object was to capture or destroy three of the enemy's gun-boats that I was informed were lying below the raft the "*Van Dorn*," "*Polk*" and "*Livingston*." I ran up close under the battery, and was mortified to see the enemy set fire to the boats, and start them adrift down upon us. I was obliged to leave the river to escape the conflagration. The three boats were totally destroyed. The enemy did not fire upon us.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the arrival of Flag-officer Farragut with nine vessels of his fleet, above Vicksburg. They passed up this morning, about 5 o'clock, through a severe fire from some 30 or 40 of the

enemy's guns. Their loss was, so far as reported, 4 men killed, 13 wounded.

Respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding.

Extract From Montgomery's (Confederate) Report.

* * * * *

The "Gen. Van Dorn" and the shore-boat "Paul Jones" made good their escape up the Yazoo River to the raft. The "Paul Jones" had on board a large amount of powder, shell and cannon balls, taken from Fort Pillow; also commissary stores, which were shipped to Yazoo City, and turned over to Lt. Brown of the U. S. Navy. On June 25 the "Gen. Van Dorn" was anchored at the raft, alongside of the "Polk" and "Livingston," when a boat of the enemy made its appearance in the vicinity. Com. Pinckney ordered his boats to be set on fire. They swung against the "Van Dorn" and she was destroyed. The "Paul Jones" is towed up the Sunflower.

* * * * *

J. E. MONTGOMERY,

Captain Commanding.

Mobile, Ala., July 1, 1862.

Meantime, as has been seen, Farragut lost no time in carrying out the plan he had formed of making a running attack upon the batteries, and getting above the city with his fleet. This bold undertaking he executed on the early morning of the 28th, and the nine vessels of his fleet which got by the batteries, and the five of Ellet's rams already there, with the addition of the SWITZERLAND, just arrived from above, constituted a formidable flotilla. And it was soon to be augmented by the gunboat fleet of Commodore Davis, then just starting down from Memphis.

From these reports it will be seen that the destruction of the Confederate gunboat "Van Dorn" (which escaped at Memphis) and the two valuable transports "Gen. Polk" and "Livingstone," intended for conversion into gunboats, was wholly due to this scouting expedition of Ellet's rams.

The fact developed that they were in an exposed and defenceless position, below a strong raft, constructed to protect the craft previously run up the Yazoo and Sunflower for safety. The Confederates do not seem to have had time to get these boats above the raft, before the movements of the Ram fleet on the Mississippi opposite, warned them against the attempt to do so. And, on noting the approach of

the rams, on the Yazoo, these boats were fired to prevent their capture, and sent adrift in the stream. Their floating masses of flame, with the possibilities of danger from explosives in their holds, was a worse menace to the Federal boats than would have been an attempt of the Confederates to fight their way out. A hasty retreat was all that remained to the rams, for that day. A work of no small importance was thus accomplished in clearing the river of rebel craft. Above the raft, however, was a formidable foe, now nearly ready to take the offensive. With the assistance of the "Gen. Polk" and the "Livingstone," had the Confederates had time for completing their armament and equipment, much injury and loss might have been inflicted upon the Federal fleet, by a well planned attack.

From information furnished by negro fugitives, and deserters, almost daily making their way through the marshes and brakes to the Federal fleet, the commanders were apprised of the threatened appearance of an armored vessel of most formidable proportions, which was likely to make its way out of the Yazoo and attack the Federal fleet at any time. These reports, in view of the past experience with rebel gunboats on the Mississippi, created very little apprehension, and as the sequel showed, scarcely caused sufficient precaution to prevent a surprise.

We have mentioned the dispatch of the *FULROX* to Memphis, at Farragut's request, bearing documents for Davis, and Washington. The return of the *FULROX* and later of the *QUEEN*, from her trip for repairs, completed the force of rams, and with the gunboats, and Farragut's vessels, constituted a formidable array against Vicksburg at this time. But there was no sufficient land force to cooperate in an attack. The brigade under Gen. Williams, then following and supporting Farragut's fleet below, was greatly overestimated by the enemy, as the following dispatch, from Vicksburg to the Grenada Appeal of June 27, shows: "Porter's mortar fleet opened on the lower batteries at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon and ceased at 7. They recommenced the bombardment at 5 this morning. Our batteries replied with but few shots or loss—two killed and three wounded. This morning it is reported that the Unionists are landing troops at Warrenton. We have no knowledge of the truth of this report, but it corresponds with their previous movements. At 4 o'clock to-day

"twelve transports came up above the gunboats and landed troops at Brown and Johnson's, on the Louisiana shore. From the number of transports engaged they must have landed a large force."

Before running the batteries Farragut had strongly represented to Washington authorities the need of such co-operation, and one of the main purposes of his first dispatches to Memphis was to have the General commanding there send a large force by river, at once, to aid in taking the place. It was at the time understood, that a considerable force was, in response to this request, embarked upon transports to be accompanied down by the LANCASTER, but when the latter signalled for an early morning start, it was found that the troops were being disembarked—the order having been countermanded—and the LANCASTER returned without them, overhauling Davis' gunboat fleet on its way at Ozark Island, about half way between Memphis and Vicksburg.

A few days later Farragut and Davis joined in an urgent appeal for a land force, to be sent at once, if it could possibly be spared.

But the army situation in the West, at which we will now take a hurried glance, was by no means favorable for such a movement. The month (June) following the occupation of Corinth was disappointing, judged from the standpoint of those specially engaged in the work of rescuing the Mississippi from Confederate grasp.

The splendid army under Halleck was rapidly scattered, Buell being returned to East Tennessee with his Army of the Ohio, and other dispositions were made reducing the force occupying Corinth, where Halleck had planned, and commenced the construction of an extensive system of fortifications. Grant, though second in command, had been persistently ignored by Halleck, was now allowed to establish his headquarters at Memphis, reaching there with his staff and escort, June 23. But his stay there was to be short, for Halleck, being called to Washington as Commander in Chief, (July 11) notified him to re-establish his headquarters at Corinth, which he did, hurriedly returning there, with his staff, July 15. The large territory to guard, with a scattered force, and the enemy concentrating to the south, under Van Dorn and Price, and with a raiding cavalry force already operating in his rear, kept Grant fully occupied at the time of which we now write. Sherman's command had been ordered to Memphis,

but having to reconstruct and operate the railroad from Grand Junction westward to Memphis, it took till the 20th of July for his force to reach that place. Meantime the Confederates were not idle. Bragg, who had succeeded Beauregard, was concentrating a large army at Chattanooga, and Van Dorn was occupied likewise in Mississippi, and soon threatened Grant's advance, below Corinth. On the West side matters were even less encouraging, for Curtis' advance was checked by the rebel forces concentrated in middle Arkansas, under Gen. Rains, and his rear and supplies threatened, by cavalry raiders, and the attempt was then being made to send Col. Fitch's brigade with supplies to his relief, from Memphis via White river.

From this cursory glance at the situation it will readily be seen why the seemingly favorable opportunity now presented for an active campaign against Vicksburg, and its immediate assault and capture, were allowed to pass unimproved.

The short period of naval inactivity following the passage of the batteries by Farragut's fleet, was enlivened by the scene of hundreds and later thousands of contrabands, at work in the channel of the canal across the neck. This work, if not originally suggested by the President, was favored by him, and through its several stages, to final failure, received all the encouragement and assistance that the powers at Washington could give. Meantime the rebels began to recover from the stunning effect of their inglorious defeat at Memphis, and on both sides of the river scouting parties began to make their appearance, and assume the offensive. Passing boats were fired upon, at various points between Vicksburg and Memphis, by a seemingly concerted action, which menaced, not only transports, but war vessels as well, whose pilots and other officers were more or less exposed in the performance of their duties, when under way. A communication belonging to this period, from Col. Ellet to the Secretary of War, is here given, presenting quite forcefully several aspects of the situation at this time:

United States Ram Switzerland,
Above Vicksburg, July 13, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: I have received from Quartermaster Brooks ten brass field pieces to add to the security of my boats from the attacks of the guerilla bands that are now infesting the banks of the river, and, to enable us to inflict punish-

ment on such bands when they do attack us. I find it necessary to enable me to man these guns to ask for authority to increase my military force 75 men and, if consistent with the service, would wish to obtain these men from the Seventh Regiment Ill. Volunteer Infantry. At present I am keeping my force occupied by occasionally sending a boat to Memphis at the request of Flag-officers Farragut and Davis, and by reconnoissances up the Yazoo River. Yesterday I found our guns of great service upon one of these trips. I was attacked and fired into by various bands, who scattered and fled before each well directed discharge of grape. The Yazoo River is lined with these ruffian bands and filled with valuable steamers owned by the Southern Confederacy. I have but just recovered from a severe spell of illness that has confined me to my bed for six days. I have offered myself and all my force to Flag-officer Farragut, and Davis to assist in any enterprise they may wish to attempt. I shall of course promptly respond to any call from either of them.

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Lieut. Col. Comd'g Fleet.

Meantime, the appeal made by Farragut and Davis for a co-operating land force to be sent to their assistance, meeting no response from the new Commander-in-Chief, and advices reaching Washington of the steady decline of the waters of the Mississippi, orders were being considered requiring the departure of the Gulf Squadron from that vicinity. Secretary Stanton (July 14) wrote Gen. Halleck this pertinent inquiry: "The Secretary of the Navy desires to know whether you have, or intend to have, any land force to co-operate in the operations at Vicksburg. Please inform me immediately, inasmuch as orders he intends to give will depend on your answer."

This said, as plainly as could well be expressed by implication, that unless plans for the co-operation of the Western army were then made, the Navy department would withdraw the Gulf Squadron and the attack upon Vicksburg would be abandoned. Halleck's answer, from Corinth, was the sequel of a series of most disastrous mistakes in the war on the Mississippi—mistakes that cost blood and treasure almost immeasurable. This was his reply:

Corinth, Miss., July 15, 1862.

I can not, at present, give Commodore Farragut any aid against Vicksburg. I am sending reinforcements to Gen. Curtis in Arkansas, and to Gen. Buell in Tennessee and Kentucky.

H. W. HALLECK.

Unaware of the foregoing portentous correspondence the Naval Commanders above Vicksburg were anxiously planning for doing all in their power against the enemy. A note from Farragut to Col. A. W. Ellet, July 14, reads: "Dear Colonel: Gen. Williams and Flag Officer Davis are on board here, [*Hartford*]. Will you come, and we will try and fix up an expedition for the Yazoo."

Col. Ellet at once joined the conference on the *Hartford*, and the result was an increase of the usual patrol—one ram and one gunboat—by a third, carrying a detachment of soldiers from Gen. Williams' command, to engage the enemy hidden along the forest-lined shores, the trio to ascend to the raft, next morning.

At an early hour on the morning of July 15 this patrol expedition, consisting of the gunboat *Tyler*, Lieut. Comd'g Gwynn, with the soldiers, aboard, the gunboat *Carondelet*, Capt. Walke, and the ram *QUEEN* under Lieut. Hunter, an infantry officer who had just been assigned to the vessel, on her return from the ways at Cairo. Although apprehensive of ultimate trouble from the much-discussed rebel ram, no special importance attached to the day's operations, further than its expected ability to push on safely as far as to the raft, with the protecting help of the sharpshooters on the *Tyler*, while the usual trip had been but 15 or 20 miles. They had frequently been fired on from the woods, and "shelling the enemy"—seen or unseen, was no uncommon occurrence.

The following were Lt. Col. Ellet's written instructions for the day:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, Above Vicksburg, July 14th, 1862.

Lieutenant Hunter:

Will proceed up the river in steam ram *QUEEN OF THE WEST*, in company with gun-boat *Tyler* as far as the officer of that boat deems it necessary to proceed for the purposes he has in view. He will take particular caution to keep his ram all the time under cover, with rifles in hand, ready at any moment to return a fire from the enemy. He will keep his brass guns loaded so that if an opportunity occurs, he may throw a destructive fire into the enemy's ranks. He can not be too cautious about keeping his men under cover. Many valuable lives have been lost by allowing the men to expose themselves unnecessarily. He will, if the *Tyler* should be attacked by an enemy's ram, dash his boat to her rescue, and make his boat serve

the purpose for which it was designed, by sinking the enemy's boat by running full speed right head on into her.

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

The coal supply of the squadron was at this period quite low, and it was the habit of boat's officers, not under special orders, while lying at anchor, to allow fires dampened and frequently one or more boats' fires were put out, to allow of cleaning boilers, an operation quite necessary on some of them, where high steam was required in service.

An hour or so after the patrol had left the fleet, distant guns were heard in the direction of the Yazoo, and presently it was noticed that the sounds were louder, and more frequent. Still the cause did not seem to occur to any one, until the nearer approach of the firing which was entirely hidden from view by the dense forest of willow, began to attract general attention throughout the fleet, and on a few of the vessels men were called to quarters, merely as a habit of the service. Presently it was noticed that the firing was being kept up, after the boats had made the turn of the Yazoo and down the Mississippi. Then it flashed upon the officers and men of the whole squadron that it was the rebel ram "Arkansas" with whom our picket boats were fighting, and that she was even then rounding into the Mississippi scarcely two miles above the fleet. At that instant the *QUEEN* hove in sight, coming down at full speed, and a little later the *Tyler* followed, while in their rear and firing at them at short intervals, plowed the low rakish looking rebel craft, with slanting iron covered decks, and her port holes bristling with guns. As she neared the fleet at anchor scattered along near a mile of river, she began a most effective fire from every gun. The *QUEEN*, whose commanding officer seemed that day to have thought only by the apparent invulnerable quality of the ram, and to have deemed it his first duty to hasten to the fleet with news of the danger, passed down near the *Hartford* and rounded to, astern of her, fouling her anchor chains, and swinging helplessly alongside. The "Arkansas" steadily kept the middle of the stream, and as there were vessels at anchor on both sides, her gunners were not at a loss for targets as she moved down, through the entire mile of naval batteries. At the first moment of her appearance every man of the three commands was at his post, but while this meant the opening of a tremen-

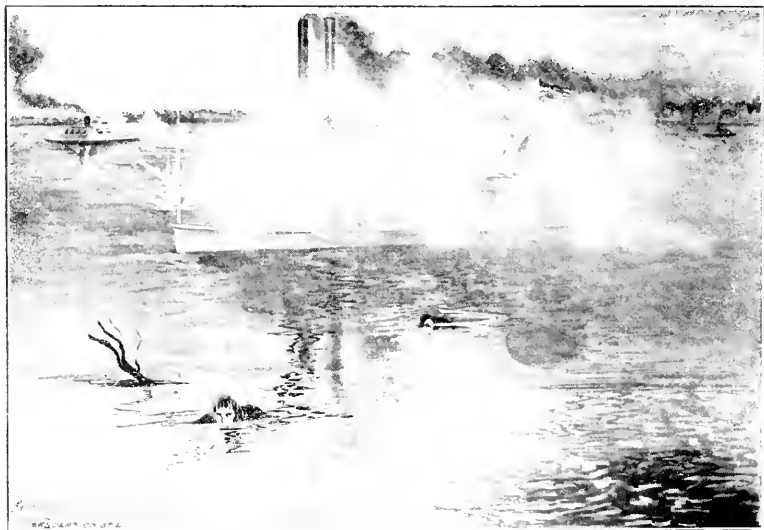
dous fire upon the rebel, as she came within reach, and the pouring upon her of broadside after broadside, from the heaviest ordnance then carried in the navy, it did not mean the effective movement of the Federal rams, two or three of which, had they had steam up and been ready for action, and commanded by men of the Ellet spirit, should have attacked her, and beyond doubt would have sunk her in the deep channel before she got within sight of Vicksburg. As it was she seemed to bear a charmed life, and to be invulnerable to the terrific commorading, for she moved on out of range, and finally rounded the point, and soon was safe under the friendly guns of the Vicksburg batteries. She had by no means escaped unharmed, but the marvel was that she escaped at all. Her casualties during the run, as stated by her Commander, Lieut. Brown, were "ten killed and fifteen wounded, not counting several slightly injured;" also that the vessel was "much cut up; our pilot house mashed, and some ugly places through our armor," and the smokestack so riddled that steam was reduced from 100 to 20 pounds.

Of the vessels of the ram fleet, nearly all of which were more or less injured by shots from the "Arkansas," the LANCASTER was the principal sufferer. She had some steam up, and the moment the ram appeared Col. Ellet signaled her to let go her anchor and attack the enemy. Promptly the order was obeyed and the LANCASTER rounded out, and made for the rebel as she was nearly opposite. But before she had gained much headway a solid shot from the "Arkansas" penetrated her bulwarks and a steam drum, instantly disabling her, and filling her with scalding steam. She floated down helplessly some little distance, in the wake of the "Arkansas," when she was overtaken and rescued and towed back to her position, by the tow boat Champion. Several other shots had penetrated her upper decks doing much damage. To her crew below decks, the effects of shell and scalding steam were most agonizing. Several killed, others maimed, scalded and otherwise injured. No official report of these casualties was found for these pages, but from diaries of the period the following are taken: John Wybrant, 1st Engineer, bad scald; John Goshen, 2d engineer, killed; George Boggs, assistant engineer, killed; Sylvester Doss, pilot, severely injured; Jack Dow and William Rice, cooks, killed; Joseph Connelly, carpenter wounded; Thomas Thompson and

Samuel Dyer, deckhands, killed; Fred King, killed; (both legs and arms cut off) and seven negro deckhands and coalbearers, scalded to death. The scene on the decks of the Lancaster following this event, was a shocking one to behold.

The details of this terrific encounter can best be told in the language of the official reports, from which sufficient extracts are here given:

From Brig. Gen. Thomas, commanding Land Forces opposite Vicksburg: ". . . Hearing that the rebel ram "Arkansas" was near-



Disaster to Ram LANCASTER
A Shot from Rebel Ram "Arkansas," Explodes her Steam Drum,
Killing and Scalding a number of Crew.

ing completion up the Yazoo, Commodore Farragut and Davis sent "two gunboats (one an iron-clad) and one of Col. Ellet's rams, in the "morning of July 14 at 5 o'clock to reconnoiter and ascertain what "other naval and co-operating land force would suffice for her capture, "or destruction or capture of the land batteries and the land force pro-"tecting her. To accompany the reconnoissance as sharpshooters, I "furnished two parties, of an officer and 20 men each. Captain J. W. "Lynn and 20 Wisconsin men, and Lieut. E. A. Fiska and 20 Massa-"chusetts men. In the encounter about to be reported, I regret to an-

"nounce the death of Capt. Lynn and 5 of his men and the wounding
 "of 5 other men—all by the exploding of one of the enemy's shells.
 "The reconnoissance had proceeded on its way to within about a mile
 "of the mouth of the Yazoo when it encountered, at 6 o'clock in the
 "morning, the rebel ram, steaming down, and at once engaged her.
 "our gunboat (*Tyler*) in the lead firing first, followed by the ram
 "QUEEN OF THE WEST and the iron-clad gunboat *Carondelet*. The
 "*Tyler*, QUEEN OF THE WEST and *Carondelet* all engaged, joining the
 "rebel ram, as she passed and coming down with her, but the QUEEN
 "OF THE WEST they say, fired, but failed to ram, though signaled to
 "ram, while our iron-clad (*Carondelet*) lay side by side with the rebel
 "ram some 5 miles exchanging broad-sides, when some sudden break in
 "steering apparatus, or engine enabled the rebel to get clear of her,
 "and leave her behind, and, to the surprise of the two fleets (who to
 "economize fuel had not steam enough to pursue) passed along down
 "and through them, firing as she came on, and in return receiving the
 "fire of several vessels of the two fleets; but she passed on, getting some
 "heavy blows indeed, but making her way to Vicksburg where she
 "now lies under the guns of the town. . . .

From Farragut's report: . . . "It is with deep mortification
 "that I announce to the Department that, notwithstanding my
 "prediction to the contrary, the iron-clad ram "Arkansas" has at
 "length made her appearance and taken us all by surprise. We had
 "heard that she was at Liverpool in the Yazoo River, and Lieut. Col.
 "Ellet informed me that the river was too narrow for our gunboats to
 "turn, and was also shallow in places—but suggested that flag officer
 "Davis might send some of his iron-clad boats which draw only 6 or 7
 "feet of water. When this was proposed to Flag-officer Davis he con-
 "sented immediately and Gen'l Williams offered to send up a few sharp-
 "shooters. The next morning they went off at daylight and by 6 in
 "the morning we heard firing up the river, but supposed it to be the
 "gunboats firing at the flying artillery, said to be lining the river. In
 "a short time, however, the gunboats appeared, and the ram in pur-
 "suit. Although we were lying with low fires, none of us had steam,
 "nor could we get it up in time to pursue her; but she took the broad-
 "side of the whole fleet. It was a bold thing and she was only saved
 "by our feeling of security. She was very much injured and was only

“able to drift or go at the slowest speed—say, one knot, and with the “current she got down to the forts of Vicksburg before any of us had “steam up.”

Porter’s history thus narrates the facts of this exciting affair: “Six miles above the mouth of the Yazoo the two gunboats and ram “met the “Arkansas” boldly steaming down to the attack. The iron “plating of the “Arkansas” rendered her impervious to the shot and “shells of our fleet, her formidable iron prow could pierce any ship’s “side and she had a formidable battery of rifled guns. The two gun- “boats and the QUEEN OF THE WEST turned to retreat down the river “firing upon the “Arkansas” as they did so. The confederate ram pur- “sued the three vessels, keeping up a vigorous fire with her bow guns “and had greatly the advantage being thoroughly protected from their “shot, and having a much heavier battery. This running fight went “on for an hour until the “Arkansas” came up with the *Carondelet* “the slowest of the three vessels and tried to run her down. The “*Carondelet* avoided her prow, and as the “Arkansas” came abreast “exchanged broad-sides with the enemy. The “Arkansas” then passed “ahead and the *Carondelet* opened on her, with the bow-guns, the shot “from which seemed to glance harmlessly from her stern. At this “moment the *Carondelet’s* wheel ropes were shot away for the third “time and she steered into the shore. . . . The “Arkansas” never “stopped, but made the best of her way in pursuit of the *Tyler* and “QUEEN OF THE WEST both of which were carrying on all steam to “notify the squadron that the “Arkansas” was coming. The sound of “the guns was heard in the fleet, but it was taken as indication of some “conflict with bush whackers.” The ram *Genl. Bragg* was the only “vessel that had steam up, and her Captain unfortunately waited for “orders instead of slipping her chain and attacking the “Arkansas” “when she came up with the fleet. Had the *Bragg* done this she would “doubtless have disabled the “Arkansas” by ramming her as the latter “vessel was already damaged in her motive power.

Commander Alden of the *Richmond* thus wrote in his published journal of the disaster to the LANCASTER “We [the *Richmond*] were “the first vessel she had to pass. When she (“Arkansas”) was about two “ships lengths ahead of us, the ram LANCASTER was steaming across “under our stern when a shot from the “Arkansas” struck the LANCAS-

"HER boiler, scalding a great many men; the sight was terrible as she "was just in front of us. The scalded men jumped overboard, and "some of them never came to the surface again. There were 10 or 12 "in the water, some swimming and some holding on to the rudder. "A boat was lowered from the LANCASTER to pick up her drowning "men. By this time she had drifted astern of us, and the "Arkansas" "came on down, and as she passed we fired our whole broadside into her.

Graphic accounts were given in the reports of the rebel commander and his subordinates, but they add little to the foregoing, as related to ram fleet history.

The Fleet Commanders were greatly chagrined that the daring rebel craft had taken them unawares, and not only inflicted severe injuries and losses upon their vessels and men, but had apparently proved itself invulnerable, and was now a dangerous part of the defenses of Vicksburg. Farragut at once gave orders for preparing to go below that night, realizing the danger to his vessels, and the mortar fleet below, should the "Arkansas" assume the offensive.

That night the nine vessels of the Gulf Squadron assisted by three of Davis' vessels—attacking the upper batteries, made the run; engaging the batteries in a desultory fire, with slight injury to the boats, but a casualty list of five killed and sixteen wounded. He had, however, rejoined his fleet, below the dangerous enemy, and was reinforced by the *Sumpter*, a staunch ram captured at Memphis.

Secretary of the Navy Welles in his dispatches to Farragut and Davis, concerning the escape of the "Arkansas" to safety under the guns of Vicksburg, had expressed the "mortification of this department" in somewhat caustic language, and the implied censure was not altogether undeserved. The official correspondence between the two naval commanders at this juncture seems to recognize the gravity of the situation, and that they must use their best efforts to destroy the ram, and in this feeling Ellet was a full sharer as his actions proved. But Davis was reluctant to risk much for that object, and represented that the "Arkansas" was "comparatively harmless, where she was," from which view Farragut dissented, declaring he didn't think she would "remain harmless long," and urged in vain that Davis plan another attack and indicate what Farragut should do to co-operate.

Ellet chafed under the acknowledged failure of his rams to meet the late emergency, and resolved that their prestige should be regained at whatever cost. Calling upon Davis in person, he laid before him a plan for attacking the "Arkansas" as she lay at the Vicksburg wharf. He suggested that Davis' fleet engage the batteries while he (Ellet) would, with one of his rams, strike the rebel, and if possible, destroy her. Davis communicated with Farragut across the peninsula, and while the matter was pending Ellet wrote the following note to Davis, showing his anxiety lest the proposal should not be approved by the naval commanders:

Steam Ram Switzerland, off Vicksburg.

Sunday morning, July 20, 1862.

To H. C. Davis, Flag-Officer Gun-boat Flotilla:

Permit me to say, Commodore, that I apprehend the continued existence of the rebel gunboat "Arkansas" so near us, is exerting a very pernicious influence upon the confidence of our crews, and even upon the commanders of our boats, and in view of this state of facts it does seem to me that some risk should be encountered to insure her destruction, and re-establish our own prestige upon the Mississippi River. I hope you have given my proposition your careful consideration, and trust that you may not conclude that the risk of failure is too great to attempt its accomplishment. I feel great confidence that, with united action, it will be made a complete success. I will myself command a boat that I shall select to run the "Arkansas" down, with a very small but carefully chosen crew; while, if you and Com. Farragut will vigorously attack the batteries, I shall feel that success will surely attend the effort. Hoping to hear from you favorably as to the attempt to destroy the rebel gun-boat "Arkansas," and that you will excuse the freedom of these suggestions from one whose experience is so slight, as compared with your own mature judgment, I remain, with feelings of great respect,

Your very obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

When Farragut was informed of Ellet's proposal he at once came across the peninsula in person, and with Davis, called on Ellet, on board his flagship, the SWITZERLAND. Their conference lasted over an hour, and the details of their plan for a simultaneous attack by the fleets above and below upon the batteries, were agreed upon. The *Essex* was to drop down and engage the "Arkansas" with her fire, while Ellet, with the QUEEN, should plunge into the rebel boat and

endeavor to destroy it. No memorandum in writing was made of these details, but the above was the substance of it—at least as Ellet understood it—and attempted to carry it out. Preparations were at once begun for this desperate undertaking. The vessels to take part were coaled and got in readiness, and for the QUEEN Col. Ellet called for a special volunteer crew, willing to risk their lives in the attempt, the object and nature of which were fully understood by every man. The names of the crew and volunteers on this occasion are fortunately preserved.

At an early hour Davis' boats were on the move, the *Essex* taking the lead. As soon as the *Essex* rounded the point the firing began. The QUEEN followed, and as the battle thickened, she headed, with all steam on, for the location where the ram was known to be lying. As the QUEEN neared the scene of conflict between the "Arkansas" and the *Essex*, the latter was observed to be withdrawing, and then to continue down stream past the batteries. This left the QUEEN the vessel to encounter the fire of all the enemy's guns. But she boldly rounded in, and headed for the rebel ram, which was now seen to be lying with stern ashore, and head well out in the stream—a position well chosen to avoid the ram. The blow was therefore a glancing one, and while the shock was severe it was not decisive. Under a terrific gun fire, the QUEEN backed away, and headed up stream, and though fairly riddled in the upper works by shot and shell, she made her way back to safety, without the loss of a man. In the excitement of the moment of collision, a sharpshooter had jumped, or fallen, overboard, and was supposed to have drowned, but he swam down a mile or more, to Farragut's fleet, and was picked up, and afterward returned in safety.

The annals of naval warfare show no more daring encounter than this of the QUEEN, with a foe, her equal as a ram, and her superior as to armament, under the protection of invincible batteries of artillery of heaviest caliber, and without support during the whole attack.

Ellet's report affords the details of this heroic action, and some pretty vigorous views on the lack of promised co-operation:

United States Ram Switzerland.

Off Vicksburg, July 23, 1862, 8 a. m.

Sir:—I have the honor to inform you that, in accordance with preconcerted arrangements, made with Flag-officers Farragut and Davis, I, in the

Queen of the West, made an attack upon the rebel ram and gun-boat Arkansas lying under the batteries at Vicksburg. I regret to say, that, owing to the failure upon the part of the parties who were to co-operate with me in the attack, from some cause that is yet unexplained to me, I did not succeed as I expected in destroying the Arkansas. I did succeed, however, in striking a severe blow, and no doubt inflicted severe injury upon her, but being unsupported by the Essex and Sumpter, as I had been led to expect, and exposed alone to the united fire of all the upper batteries, I was obliged to draw off without accomplishing the full result anticipated. The position that the Arkansas occupies was a very favorable one for my attack. I could not reach her vulnerable side without rounding about and thus lost much headway. The consequence was that she failed to receive the effects of a full blow. In making my retreat, most unfortunately for me, our gun-boats had retired, and I had the undivided attention of all the enemy's batteries and sharpshooters that lined the river bank. The consequence was, the Queen was completely riddled with balls and very much damaged. Most fortunately no one was seriously hurt, although several were slightly wounded. I had taken the precaution to reduce my crew upon the boat to the smallest number possible of men by which the boat could be handled, and to this cause I attribute the fact there was no loss of life. I can not close this communication without bearing testimony to the cool, heroic bravery of all the officers and men on the boat during this hour of severe trial. To Lieut. J. M. Hunter of the 63rd Ill. Volunteers, I attribute in an eminent degree the final escape of the boat and all on board. His dauntless behavior is worthy of all praise. The engineers and pilots can not be too highly praised. When the boat was full of steam and, of course, so hot as barely to be endurable, with shells bursting, one in the pilot house, another in the engine room, with shot tearing the boat on every side of you, unflinchingly every man stood to his post. It is with the greatest pleasure that I bear this testimony to the heroic daring of these officers. I am compelled to send the QUEEN north for repairs. She is so much damaged she can not be put in order here. My force is greatly reduced by sickness, so that I find it exceedingly difficult to keep my boats at all times ready for that service. I have in a previous dispatch requested authority to make a detail of a large military force so as to man my howitzers and increase my guard. It will be necessary to keep part of my boats constantly traversing this river to disperse the guerilla bands that are beginning to infest its banks. I shall be glad to receive some instructions upon the subject from you.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding Ram Fleet.

To Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

The following is the list of the officers, crew and volunteers on the

QUEEN, which accompanied the above report—prepared by Lieut. Hunter, at Col. Ellet's request:

OFFICERS, CREW AND VOLUNTEERS ON QUEEN IN ATTACK ON THE ARKANSAS UNDER THE GUNS OF VICKSBURG.

Lieut. Col. [A. W.] Ellet, commanding, and son, Edward C. Ellet; Lieut. James M. Hunter (63rd Ill.); Peter Brown, 1st Mate; Martin Trimpe, 2nd Mate; Alexander Ford, 1st Pilot; B. F. Rea, 2nd Pilot, with Rolla S. McKay, (volunteer Pilot from Switzerland); Jacob Lauber, 1st Engineer; John McCullough, 2nd Engineer; Thomas Woods, 3rd Engineer; John Skelton, 4th Engineer; James Carr, Ass't Engineer; Granville Roberts, Volunteer Engineer (from Switzerland); Wm. H. Nixon, John Wilson, Joseph Taylor (some of them officers of other rams), and John Montague, as deck hands, and the following colored men, as firemen: George Ball, Timothy Harrison, George Williams, George Lee, Alex Cook, James Johnson, Thornton Stewart and Wilson Bartlett; also the following privates of the 63rd Ill. Vols., viz.: George Meffert, David Glathart, Thomas Jordan, Chas. D. Falconer and Joseph Taylor (volunteer).

The coolness exhibited by Granville Roberts in handling the engines prompts me to recommend him to your higher consideration, as worthy of your confidence in any emergency. There are other officers that deserve the highest praise, as the action of all my soldiers (63rd Ill. Vols.) in all engagements, as in this, while on board the Queen, has been most satisfactory, always ready and willing to encounter the enemy.

(Signed),

JAMES M. HUNTER,
Lieutenant.

It will be noticed that the officer second in Command on this occasion was Lieut. Hunter, who commanded the QUEEN on the day the rebel ram came out of Yazoo, and who was severely blamed for her not attacking the ram that day. When the crew was being formed for this exploit, Hunter begged the privilege of remaining on the QUEEN, that he might show whether he would fight or not. Col. Ellet's report makes special mention of his bravery and usefulness in the perils of the return trip, and fully exonerated him from previous censure. Indeed it was shown in a court of inquiry that he was not responsible for the movements of the vessel on the previous occasion. The following graphic description of this encounter was sent immediately after it occurred, by one of the war correspondents who witnessed the scene, and was published in the northern press.

"The *Essex*, *Louisville*, *Cincinnati*, *Benton* (Davis' Flagship) and the *Bragg* were coaled and prepared for the attack, the *Essex* crew bringing a large quantity of sand bags aboard, and packing them on her upper deck over the boilers. On Tuesday morning between 3 and 4 o'clock, Flag Officer Davis' fleet was under way, the *Essex* taking the lead, and soon approached the upper bend above Vicksburg. The QUEEN with her gallant crew followed, and as soon as the firing commenced a full head of steam was put on, and the devoted vessel sped on her way to attack her formidable and dread-inspiring foe. When the QUEEN came in sight of the "Arkansas," the *Essex* was about a half-mile ahead, and did not stop to engage her but continued her course replying steadily to the rebel fire, but soon passing the scene of the QUEEN's expected encounter. This disconcerted Col. Ellet, for he had expected to find the iron-clad in close quarters with the rebel gunboat. At this critical moment (as the QUEEN was passing the Benton, to make the attack) Flag Officer Davis, from her deck, shouted to Col. Ellet, Good luck! Good-luck! which Ellet misunderstood for, Go back, go back! and ordered the engines stopped, and reversed. The time thus lost was well improved by the rebels who gave the QUEEN lasting proofs of the power and accuracy of their guns, and the check thus given when speed resulted favorably to the rebel vessel. The "Arkansas" had steam up, and lay immediately in front of one of the lower water batteries, which it was expected that Commodore Farragut would have engaged, but singular and unaccountable as it may seem he signally failed to do so. The only part he took in the affair was the firing of a few shells from his mortars. The course of the QUEEN was resumed, and as she approached the "Arkansas," which lay with her prow up stream and pointed out, the larboard and forward guns of the rebel were discharged at the QUEEN, doing great damage to her timbers, but injuring none of her crew. The ram struck the "Arkansas" immediately after the third, or last gun, on the larboard, but the blow was glancing rather than direct, owing to the position of the rebel vessel, which presented a slanting surface to the prow of the ram. Several lengths of T iron, covering the sides of the "Arkansas," were started from their places, and were seen to fall half off, but that was the only perceptible damage. The

"ram found it necessary to make good her retreat, on recovering from the shock. And now came the terrible ordeal through which the gallant craft must pass—to return up stream under the undiverted fire of the enemy's entire batteries, for monstrous as it may seem, the gunboats withdrew from the attack, even before the ram had reached the "Arkansas." Ellet saw the fiery gauntlet of a mile of batteries to be run, and like the brave and courageous commander that he is, nerved himself to the terrible task, coolly giving orders for the direction of his vessel, and finally reaching the turning point in safety, amid a perfect hurricane of shot and shell."

Although Col. Ellet, at the time counted the attack on the "Arkansas" a failure, since he did not destroy her as he hoped to do, her subsequent history, and the statements of her officers and crew show her to have received injuries in that collision, permanently impairing the working of her machinery. It is certainly true that she was never able to render any effective service, during the remainder of her existence. Of her final exit we shall speak later on.

Flag Officer Davis' report of the concerted attack on the rebel ram contains this brief mention: "The ram QUEEN OF THE WEST, commanded by Lieut. Col. [A. W.] Ellet, struck the "Arkansas" with insufficient force to do her some injury. Col. Ellet behaved on this, as on previous occasions, with great gallantry."

In the reports, and current opinion of the time concerning this attempt at the destruction of the "Arkansas", under the guns of Vicksburg, there was much censure for the apparent want of co-operation, and the seeming willingness to let Ellet fall a victim to his own bravery. The public, however, accorded Ellet and his men the honor their heroism justly entitled them to. The following, from the War Secretary indicates how the matter was viewed in Washington:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., July 31, 1862.

Your dispatch of the 23rd instant, relating to the engagement with the Arkansas, has just been received, and I have referred it to General Halleck, commander-in-chief, to give you instructions on the points desired. For your great gallantry I shall recommend you for nomination by the President, as Brigadier General.

You will return to Lieutenant Hunter and the gallant officers and soldiers and boatmen of your command the thanks of this Department.

You will please make known to me anything that may be required by your fleet, in order that it may be promptly supplied. The lamentable death of your brother deprives the country of the full report expected of him, and I wish you would supply it.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

With reason the unfavorable criticism of this affair in army and navy circles, led to attempted explanations, but they show that the understanding was faulty, and that it was modified, without Ellet's knowledge. The action of the *Essex* came in for adverse comment, and some months later her commander (W. D. Porter) wrote Ellet an explanation of his part in the attack, in which occurs these words:

"I was unaware, at the time of the *Essex* running the Vicksburg batteries and attacking the "Arkansas" on July 22, that it had been contemplated for any of your rams to butt her. It was not mentioned in the programme as arranged on the *Benton* between the Flag officers and myself on the 21st, or rely on it, you should have had all the support I or the *Essex* could have given. Had it been necessary to wait your arrival, or had my orders been so worded or intimated why, I should have waited for you until the "Arkansas" had sunk my ship, or I had destroyed her."

Meantime, however, the reputation of the *Essex* commander for truth and veracity, had suffered so severely, in the later affair of the destruction of the "Arkansas," that the assurance in the above goes for little, beyond the evident fact that he was simply "running the batteries," with the attack on the rebel boat as a mere incident, with no reference to Ellet's attempt to ram and destroy her.

Among the archives, recently published, appears a lengthy confidential letter from Lieut. S. L. Phelps, at that time commanding the *Benton*, to Flag Officer Foote, U. S. A., New Haven, Conn., which throws much light upon the affair under consideration, and probably expresses the prevailing opinions of the officers of Davis' fleet concerning it. Much of the letter is about irrelevant matters, and only extracts are given bearing directly on the seemingly inexcusable want of understanding and co-operation in that momentous undertaking. The extracts quoted serve further to show the spirit of envy and jeal-

ousy often prevailing, in both Army and Navy, and not seldom, as in this affair of the "Arkansas," resulting in failure and disaster:

U. S. Flag Steamer Benton, Mississippi River,

July 29, 1862.

My Dear Sir: * * * Things have happened that will create talk, and I desire that you at least should know where the (your) old command stands. * * * From the time of (our) arriving at Vicksburg till the ("Arkansas") feat was accomplished, Commander Farragut proposed daily to run back past the batteries to join his vessels below, from whence he had no manner of business ever to have come up. This kind of talk rendered it (Farragut being senior) impossible for Commander Davis to send the force necessary up Yazoo, as the flotilla was expected to draw the fire of the upper batteries, while the lower fleet (Farragut's) should be passing. [His account of the "Arkansas" coming down through the combined fleets is here omitted]. Flag-officer Farragut, soon after the escape of the "Arkansas," boarded us, where we lay near the upper batteries, full of going down immediately to destroy the rebel with his fleet going off at once—couldn't waste a moment. * * * It was settled that we, at 6 o'clock would engage the upper batteries, while the lower fleet was passing, which would leave ample daylight for them to see the rebel gun-boat. * * * The thing was a failure. * * * Next day Flag-officer Farragut writes: "I am going up this evening to attack that fellow, and I shall continue to attack him, or my whole fleet is destroyed." How anxiously we listened for the opening guns, still only for disappointment. Night came and passed away, its air undisturbed by a sullen sound. Next day there were still threats of destruction to the horrid enemy, and this kind of thing went on till finally the Essex and ram Queen of the West made their attempt. This was against Commander Davis's judgment, and entirely a plan of Farragut's. * * * The Commander himself came up, spent most of the day with Davis and matured a plan of attack, which was this: The Essex and ram Queen were to go down and attack the "Arkansas" at daylight next morning, we covering them at the upper batteries, while the lower fleet should attack the lower batteries and prevent their firing with effect upon the attacking boats. The ram Sumpter [which had been sent down with Farragut's returning vessels] was to go up to assist in the attack on the rebel. Commander Farragut insisted, however, on going up to attack the "Arkansas" with his vessels, passing the lower forts to do so, but was urged by Commander Davis not to do so. The rebel lay between the upper batteries all that day and all night. At 10:30 p. m. an officer arrived from the lower fleet with a note (from Farragut) saying that the rebel was between the upper batteries, and did Commander Davis think it advisable that Commander Farragut's fleet should pass the lower forts to go up to attack him. Observe that passing those forts was not a part of the plan, and only a pet idea of Commander Farragut's.

frequently declared to be his view and intention, though not approved by others, and that the rebel still lay where he had been for twenty-four hours. This note was answered frankly, and without caution, to the effect that the vessels attacking the rebel, Essex, Queen, and the Sumpter (from below) could destroy the craft or drive him up or down stream to the one squadron or the other, and that passing the lower forts was not necessary; that such was the understanding had. Morning came, we engaged the upper batteries, the Essex and Queen in due time passed down. No guns from the lower fleet could be heard. We continued to listen in vain, and our hearts again grew heavy. Our two vessels, unsustained, could not endure the fire of both batteries and rebel gun-boat. The rebel fire was very heavy. Presently the Queen came up badly shattered. She had struck the rebel but not effectively, and in the terrible fire upon her could not renew the attempt. * * * The lower fleet was at anchor, the Sumpter not to be seen. * * * No explanation was made of the failure of the lower fleet to do its part in this attack. The Sumpter's orders required her to wait till that (the lower) fleet should open upon the lower batteries, which was to have been simultaneous with our fire upon the upper works, when she was to push up to the attack. Erben waited vainly for the concerted signal. * * * I am told that Commander Davis's letter was construed as a request to make no attack on the lower batteries. Knowing the plan * * * is it possible to render it in that manner? Can a gallant man so construe it? Could a man who has to be (?) held back with curb and checkrein, so read it? It was no part of the plan to pass those batteries, but to attack them, at 1,200 or 1,500 yards, from below, the whole thing was a fizzle. Every day we heard great things threatened, only to realize fizzes. * * * The lower fleet left, not a vessel sunk in the flourish of so much talk about destroying the "Arkansas" or being destroyed. The land force also left. * * * Forty per cent. of our people were already sick with fever. * * * No good could arise from remaining where we were. * * * For these reasons we are now on our way up to Helena, Ark. * * *

Respectfully and most truly,

S. L. PHELPS.

Lieut. Comd'g U. S. S. Boats.

Commodore Farragut was already under tentative orders to return to the lower river, and had delayed his departure to await the results of the attempt upon the "Arkansas." He now turned his prows southward, encountering a heavy fire at the Warrenton batteries, without serious damage. With him went the Porter mortar fleet and the transports bearing General Williams' troops. On his arrival at New Orleans (July 29) he made his report, from which we quote so much as relates to the "Arkansas" affair:

Extract from
Farragut's Report to Welles.

N. O. July 29, 1862.

* * * Unfortunately the ironclad ram "Arkansas" came down on the 15th before I received your order (to move down Mississippi on account of falling water) and her commander being satisfied with the reception we gave her that she was not shot proof, kept her close in under the forts, which were mounted with 8 and 10 inch Columbiads and 50-lb rifles.

Still Flag-officer Davis was determined that as Commander W. D. Porter thought his vessel, the Essex, was shot-proof, he would make an attack on the ram and drive her down to us, or destroy her. He had also determined to let the Sumpter run at her, and to let Col. (A. W.) Ellet also attack her with one of his rams. The ram lay between the two forts at the upper end of the river, about four miles above the (my) fleet. It was stipulated that I was not to pass up the river, but be ready to receive her if she attempted to come down.

Unfortunately the attack was a failure. The Essex ran at the ram, but being so clumsy, they let the bow of the ram swing off from shore, so that the Essex ran fast aground; but she delivered her 3-in. guns into the ram at not more than 10 or 12 feet, and those who saw the ram afterward say she had a large hole knocked into her.

Col. Ellet's ram ran also at the ironclad, but the fire from the forts and ram so damaged her that it was with difficulty she got back to her anchorage, and it was only remarkable that she was not destroyed. We do not know that she damaged the ram. The Sumpter, from some misunderstanding, did not go in. This was a daring act on the part of Col. Ellet and one from which both Flag-officer Davis and myself tried to deter him. The Essex, after she got afloat ran down to our fleet, through a storm of shot and shell.

In a communication from the Admiral to the department, just before leaving the vicinity of Vicksburg, is found this kindly mention of those with whom he had been associated in the first attempt upon that place: "It gives me great pleasure to say that Gen'l Williams, "Col. Ellet, and the Army officers of this division generally have uniformly shown a great anxiety to do everything in their power to "assist us; but their force is too small to attack the town or for any "other purpose than a momentary assault to spike guns, should such "an opportunity offer."

The QUEEN was so shattered and disabled from this conflict that it was found necessary to send her north for repairs, and she was started at once for the ways at St. Louis. This was July 23. A number of

the sick and disabled of the fleet's crews were sent on her, to be discharged. On her way the QUEEN was fired upon by a rebel battery at Greenville, and a steam pipe was cut by a shot, which killed the ship's carpenter, Thomas Spencer, but the injury to the vessel was slight, and she proceeded on her way. At Cairo those to be discharged were sent to their destinations up the Ohio, and the QUEEN then hastened on to St. Louis.

At this point it may prove interesting to the reader to give some of the prior history of the ram "Arkansas" as it is found in the official rebel correspondence of the period. Lieut. Isaac N. Brown, C. S. N., the officer sent to complete and command the "Arkansas," writes to Gen. Ruggles, (Commanding at Grenada) from Greenwood, on the Yazoo, May 29, 1862, of the backward condition in which he found the work, and his need of carpenters, machinists, etc., and that he should have her towed to Yazoo City next day, for better facilities in the work. On the 11th of June (two days before the battle at Memphis—he writes again of his difficulties—one being a conflict with the commander he superseded, whom he says he came near shooting—and promises to be ready in 20 days. In this letter he mentions: "There is a raft across the Yazoo, twenty-two miles below this point. Two heavy and two light guns are there in position, I understand, but no men to work them. I have sent the *Mobile*, gunboat, to the raft to make the best defense possible should the enemy appear there." On the 9th in another letter to Ruggles, replying to some suggestion: "it would have been impossible properly to have moved the "Arkansas" as, with all our efforts, we cannot yet raise steam or use the engines. There is a raft across the Yazoo River twenty-five miles below here, but no force to prevent an enemy from opening it. Two 42s have been mounted on a hill overlooking the raft, but a few infantry could take this battery and turn it against the only gunboat I have above the raft to defend it. Two of the C. S. gunboats came to the raft, day before yesterday, but it was not, under the possible condition of things, thought prudent to break the obstructions to let them through. They are now transferring their stores and armament to be used on this side, and are then to be sent up the Sunflower. The commissary stores brought on the "Paul Jones" are also to be crossed over the raft and brought to Yazoo City. The ram "Gen. Earl Van

"Dorn" had not made its appearance at the raft this morning. I have written to Gen. Lovell at Jackson, that a regiment of riflemen would be necessary, with a company of heavy artillery, to defend the raft. A battery of light guns would also be of use. I am trying all I can to get the "Arkansas" ready and will try to have three more guns mounted at the raft, if I can, in time." Again, on the 22nd he writes Ruggles, acknowledging receipt of his letter with a copy of Gen. Thompson's report [Probably of battle at Memphis] "If the expedition of Gen. Wallace [Meaning Ellet's ram fleet] ascends the Yazoo within the next few days I fear the "Arkansas" will not be ready for a vigorous opposition to it. Our armament is not quite complete and we cannot get a crew. I sent to Grenada some days ago, to engage men from the Montgomery fleet, and from the answers given to the officer charged with the duty, I was led by Commodore Montgomery to believe that I could obtain men from his late command, and I further supposed that they came here from Grenada with the purpose of joining the "Arkansas." These people were paid off and discharged yesterday, by Montgomery, and I do not believe I will get one of them, though I have tried every way to induce them to join the "Arkansas." They talk among themselves of going to New Orleans. Many will, I think, attempt to reach Memphis. I think that with few exceptions they intend to join the enemy. I hope you will cause them to be cared for, while making the attempt. I can obtain two-thirds of a crew from the C. S. vessels now in the Yazoo, and having failed with Montgomery's men, I will apply to Gen. M. L. Smith, at Vicksburg, who can give me 40 or 50 more. Efforts to ship men at Mobile and Jackson failed. I can do nothing just now to aid in saving boats along the Mississippi River, from which by the Yazoo, I am ninety miles distant. My attention is entirely required in getting the "Arkansas" ready. Our defenses at the raft, on the Yazoo, will prove weak against a land force—two E2s and a few militia. The gunboats below may serve as fireships. Three guns have been taken from the "Arkansas." The ram "Van Dorn" has been ordered to the mouth of the Yazoo, to report the enemy's proceedings. No intelligence yet of the enemy's approach from above. . . . I will do what I can to injure the enemy." On June 24, Gen. Ruggles, at Grenada, dispatched Gen. Van Dorn at Jackson: "Hope to send Gen. Thompson's men to the

Ram "Arkansas,"—and received reply as follows: "Can you send messenger to commander of ram "Arkansas," and suggest to him to "come out, run the fleet, and get behind [below] them, and sink transports? If he is fast enough he can do this easily. He could clear the river below. It is better to die game, and do some execution, than to lie by, and be burned up in the Yazoo." On the 25, Lieut. Brown writes Ruggles as follows: "I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of yesterday, with copy of Gen. Van Dorn's dispatch. I regret to find that by implication it is thought I would prefer burning the "Arkansas" in Yazoo river, to hurling the vessel against the enemy. I have never required prompting in any duties I have been called on to perform, and those who have been impatient spectators of my conduct here will not accuse me of having been idle. That I am not yet ready is because I could not perform impossibilities. The "Montgomery fleet did not give me one man. They went from here, paid off, and with honorable discharges, though three months of their enlisted time had yet to run. This, too, when Montgomery knew the "Arkansas," armed and with provisions and ammunition, was waiting for men. I hope you will catch the fellows, and apply the conscript law to them—officers and all."

"Twenty-five men came today from Vicksburg, and I shall now soon have a crew. I trust we shall use our vessel creditably, and if the army will attack, against the same odds as that which awaits me, the war will soon be over. I thank you for the kind assistance offered and rendered. The work I have had to do would have been left, under ordinary circumstances. The difficulties are only known to those engaged in it." June 26, a dispatch from Jackson Davis (Richmond) to Gen. Van Dorn said: . . . "The commander of the "Arkansas" has been ordered to report to you." On the 28th Van Dorn reported the passage of Farragut's fleet by the batteries of Vicksburg in this dispatch: "Bombardment heavy yesterday and this morning. No flinching. Houses perforated; none burned yet. Contest will commence when enemy attempt to land; he will probably try it. Crippled several boats. They only amuse our men by firing on them occasionally. There are about forty vessels of war and mortar boats—all sound and fury,—and, to brave men, contemptible. Will keep you advised." On July 1, Gen. Ruggles, from Tangipahoa, La.,

informed Lieut. Brown: "A detail of 126 men was made at Grenada, "from Gen. Jeff. Thompson's troops and ordered to report to you, before I was relieved from command of the special. Telegraph Gen. "Thompson near Panola." A dispatch from President Davis dated July 13, to Van Dorn, inquires: . . . "What of the "Arkansas?" and another of 14th, to Gen. M. L. Smith, inquires: "What progress is being made toward the completion of the "Arkansas?" What is "the condition of your defenses at Vicksburg. Can we do anything "to aid you? Disasters above and below you [Memphis and New Orleans] increase the value of your position. I hope and expect much "from you." To the first of these Van Dorn responded. (July 11): ". . . The "Arkansas" was to have been out this morning; have "not yet heard why she has not made her appearance; look for her "every moment. She has much to contend with here, but it was deemed "better to let her try her strength, than to go aground in the Yazoo, "and be burned up like the rest. Pinkney should be tried by court "martial. "Arkansas" ordered to run the gauntlet, and, if successful, "to sweep the river below, and run to Mobile as soon as out. I will inform you of result. Canal not yet in running order."

The appearance and subsequent story of this noted rebel ram, has already been told in the foregoing pages. The ending of her career will be told later.

Immediately after the departure of Farragut's fleet the rebels began to assume the offensive, and at several points on the river, transports, and war vessels alike were fired upon and several of the former captured and burned. Reports from the Yazoo indicated that other craft were in process of reconstruction, and might be expected on the Mississippi, any day. Added to the difficulties of the situation, sickness now began to prevail in the fleet, and on some of the boats more than half of its officers and men were down with a malarial fever. This condition of the health of the fleet had been prevailing, even before Farragut's departure, for we find it recorded in the log of the Richmond: "June 28. At 9 a. m. one of our rams [FULTON] left for Memphis with mail": also "ram SWITZERLAND brought down some ice for our wounded and sick." 29th. "At 6 p. m. ram SWITZERLAND left here with mail." July 6th. "MOXARCH came along side and took all our sick and wounded on board, and proceeded at once up the

river to Memphis." This record also indicates the readiness of the boats of the ram fleet for any service required. These conditions, and the lack of sufficient supplies and medicines for the treatment and care of the sick, together with the futility of further operations in that vicinity, induced both Davis and Ellet to move northward, and the first of August found the entire flotilla anchored at Helena. About this time Lieut. Currie of the *SAMSOX* received notice of his promotion to be Captain, in his old regiment (the 59th Ill. Vols), and left the fleet on the *MONARCH*, as she was going to Memphis, and proceeded to join his regiment in the field.

Other features of the difficult situation, now ensuing, are presented in the following communication of Col. A. W. Ellet to Secretary Stanton.

United States Ram Switzerland.
Above Vicksburg, July 25, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

I have the honor to apply to you for instructions. Some of my officers and men have deserted their posts and disobeyed my orders at a period of great danger to the public service. I have the parties under arrest, but can find no means either through Commodore Farragut or Davis or General Williams or Grant, to bring them to trial. I have been obliged in consequence of the great amount of sickness that prevails among my crews, to employ large numbers of blacks, who came to me asking protection. Some of them had been in the employ of General Williams, and left by him unprovided for on the Louisiana shore. I am desirous to know what I am to do with these people after I no longer require their services, and how am I to bring these offending parties to trial.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Lieutenant Colonel Commanding.

The inquiry relative to the trial of offenses, was referred to General Halleck and his reply was made soon after in the following words:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington August 1, 1862.

Col. Ellet, Ram Fleet, Vicksburg, Miss.:

You will employ such negroes as you require on your boats and send the others who are under your protection to Memphis to be employed by General Sherman. Your prisoners can be sent to Memphis for trial and a court

martial can be ordered there for their trial as soon as the witnesses can be spared.

H. W. HALLECK,
Major-General Commanding.

On receipt of Halleck's dispatch, Col. Ellet at once sent the prisoners referred to, in charge of Capt. Geo. Q. White, to be delivered to Gen. Sherman, at Memphis.

In a communication to Captain Brooks, from Helena, at this date, Col. Ellet speaks of the causes of this retrograde movement, and also presents a new project, for making the Ram Fleet a more independent and more effective arm of the service. The letter follows:

Steamer Ram Switzerland,
Off Helena, Ark., Aug. 4, 1862.

James Brooks, Special Quartermaster, Etc.:

Dear Sir: I arrived at this place last night with my fleet in company with the whole gun-boat squadron. We were compelled to move north, owing to the crippled condition of our fleet from so large a portion of our crews being disabled by sickness. I am happy to state that the movements of the boats have exerted a salutary effect upon the health of the men. Another reason that influenced me in creating a necessity to do something was the want of subsistence supplies. My fleet was reduced very low indeed for provisions owing to the supplies sent for not having arrived. I am glad to say I found them awaiting us here. I find myself often limited in the extent and usefulness of my operations from the want of one stronger and better protected boat than any I now have in my fleet. I wish you would see the Hon. Secretary of War and set this matter before him, and if possible obtain his authority to build one strong, heavy iron-plated gun-boat and ram for my command, so that I could at all times act efficiently and independently when the services required it, without being under the necessity of applying for co-operation which, when granted, comes so slow that it is too late to be effective. A boat for my service must be fast as well as strong and should not draw more than seven feet of water, less if possible. In my opinion the usefulness of such a boat, if properly applied to the service for which it is intended, could well justify the expense to the Government. I would also suggest that the stern wheel boats of my fleet, upon which the Government has not been put to much expense, could be employed to very great advantage as tow-boats and for transportation purposes or to carry the mails: being partially protected they can pass points where boats entirely unprotected could not be expected to venture.

Your very obt' servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Lieutenant Colonel Commanding.

On the 8th of August in a second communication to Capt. Brooks, Fleet Commander Ellet mentions the relieving of Dryden, and also the discharge of his private secretary [Ewing] whom he found borne on the rolls as a steersman of the *MONARCH*, and suggests some stoppages of pay, on account of alleged sales of supplies, and again urges waiting upon Mr. Stanton about the proposed iron-clad ram. In this letter he mentions that he has received a dispatch from the War Secretary approving the Ram Fleet operations, and saying that Mr. Stanton does him the honor of promising to present his name to the President for nomination for Brigadier General. The reply of Quartermaster Brooks is worthy a place in the history of the fleet, as it so clearly indicates his grasp upon the affairs of the fleet, and his understanding of the Commander's difficulties, and of the best methods of remedying them. It also indicates the cordial relations he sustained at the War office and his ready access to Mr. Stanton in person.

Washington City, Friday, August 16th, 1862.

Col. A. W. Ellet, U. S. Ram Fleet, Mississippi River:—

Dear Sir:—I arrived here on Thursday evening. Not being able to see the Secretary of War yesterday I called out in the afternoon to see your niece, Miss Mary Ellet. This morning I had a pleasant interview with the Secretary of War. He feels a deep interest in the Ram Fleet and I hope he may grant our requests.

In reference to the question of prize money he says it is a new one in the War Department but that he will look into it and see what can be done before I leave.

Says he has no doubt our fleet is entitled to a large portion of the prizes at Memphis but supposes the Navy will claim it all.

In reference to building such a boat as we want he is to consult Gen. Halleck on the matter. He is not entirely satisfied that he has the right, as the thing now stands, to do it, but says if he has he would be willing to give us *carte blanche* to go ahead and get up such a fleet as we want. I am to have another interview with him on Monday or Tuesday when he will decide.

Yesterday, as I could not see the Secretary, I called to see the Judge Advocate to see if he could give us any light upon the best manner of disposing of the prisoners now on hand. He says the fleet being out of the regular order of things he is at a loss what to advise but recommended that the matter be referred to the Secretary of War.

This morning I called Mr. Stanton's attention to it. He was about equally puzzled. He says if you think the men have been sufficiently punished let them off and dispose of them as you please, if not, keep them longer

in prison. I think by the regulations you have the right if you choose to exercise it to stop their pay while they have been confined and off duty. As it is sickly and somewhat dangerous keeping them confined any longer, I would suggest (not advise) that you discharge them either with or without pay for the time confined, as you may judge best, and let them go. The Secretary of War will sustain you in any course you may think best to adopt about it.

I mentioned to the Secretary the difficulty about pilots. I thought the difficulty in procuring them was that the employment was dangerous and the pay less than paid in the merchant service. I thought we might make some changes in the wages of the men on the fleet profitably without increasing it on the whole.

He told me to fix them as I thought best, that we knew much better than he would what was right and proper to pay them.

My idea was if it met your approval, to pay deckhands and firemen from September 1, \$25 per month instead of \$40, the present wages. We can pick up a set of good contrabands for that purpose which with a little drilling will make good deckhands and they make the best firemen. Twenty-five dollars will be for them larger wages. This will save over \$2,000 per month. Then we can pay 1st class pilots on the *fighting boats*, say the four side wheel boats, \$225 per month, or if necessary, \$250. They get such wages on other boats. This will remove the difficulty about pilots. The only other men we will have any trouble about getting the *right stamp* is captains. It will be a question whether, to get good steamboat men and fighting men, it would not be better to exercise a little discretion about prices and pay an old captain long in the service and of good nerve and experience a little extra pay.

My idea is if we get you a good boat, to shake up the whole thing and give us such a fleet as you will not be ashamed of. Let at least three of our stern wheel boats go into other service. Keep one large and one small one, as tenders to the fleet, put your side wheel boats in good repair and well manned, and with an iron clad first class flagship you can chalk out your own course.

I don't want you to think that I have any disposition to infringe upon your authority, etc., etc., but as you have advised with me very unreservedly I offer these views for what they are worth.

I told Mr. Stanton that if the appropriation for the fleet had been made according to my estimate, we could in the course of the year save enough out of it to pay for the boat we want. So far we have not used by \$10,000 a month as much as the estimate.

If we drop three boats and add one it will make \$10,000 more, so that in six months one new boat will be paid for without increasing the estimate. She would cost about \$120,000 or \$130,000.

Respectfully yours,

JAMES S. BROOKS.

I will write you Mr. Stanton's decision before I leave here.

A few days before the fleet left the vicinity of Vicksburg and moved northward, the *LIONESS* was sent to Memphis with mail, and dispatches for Gen. Sherman, and to obtain coal and other needed supplies. The dispatches were delivered by Lieut. Crandall in person, and Sherman's replies received, and many questions asked and answered about the conditions above Vicksburg. The business of the trip concluded the *LIONESS* proceeded on her return. Not far from Greenville the boat was passing along near the east bank of the river, which was thickly grown with willow, when she was opened upon by a four gun battery of field artillery, and her upper works struck by several shots but without serious damage. The *LIONESS* had on her forecastle one brass twelve-pounder, recently mounted and the boat was at once rounded to, and the Lieutenant and his men worked that gun for half an hour shelling the line of wooded shore from which the enemy for a short time kept up a rapid fire. The only casualty from this guerrilla attack was one killed. This was Private John Chittenden, who was struck by the fragments of the first shell from the enemy, and mortally injured, dying in a few minutes. He was a noble fellow, and his death was much deplored by his comrades, his being the first to occur among them, since coming to the ram fleet service. Next day they made a grave for him on an island below and tenderly laid him to rest therein, marking the spot so that friends might remove the remains later, if they so desired. Full particulars of the death and burial were sent, with the effects of the soldier, to the address of his parents, in central Illinois.




CHAPTER IV



Aug. 1862—Jan. 1863

Withdrawal to Helena. Captures at Milliken's and Haines' Bluff. Ram Fleet Repairs. Promotions for a New Marine Command. Ram Fleet Under Col. C. R. Ellet. Incident at Cairo. Again at the Front on the Yazoo. Torpedo Fishing. Aiding the Sherman Attack at Chickasaw. With the Expedition to Capture Arkansas Post. Guarding the Yazoo.

The withdrawal of Federal vessels from the vicinity of Vicksburg was a relief to the garrison of that stronghold, which it was not slow to take advantage of. Small craft were quickly brought from hiding places in the Sunflower and neighboring bayous, and soon they were busy moving troops, munitions and supplies, to and from Vicksburg. News of these operations found its way up to the fleet at Helena, and as the health and spirits of the command began to improve, the commanders began to plan for further operations below.

An expedition was very shortly arranged, to consist of all arms of the service available, and it was in readiness to move after the lapse of two weeks from the arrival at Helena.

Mention was made, early in this history, of the transfer of Lieut. Dryden to the command of the *Moxarch*, by request of the late Col. Ellet. Just before starting on this expedition, Lt. Col. Ellet, had (owing to some irregularities of Lieut. Dryden referred to in the preceding chapter) assigned to military command of that vessel, Sergeant E. W. Bartlett, a promising young subordinate officer, already recommended for promotion to 1st Lieutenant. Dryden took umbrage at this, and, at his own request, was returned to his former command.

The object of the expedition was to surprise the enemy in their movement on and across the river, from the Yazoo, and again break

their communication, and transfer of supplies from that river to Vicksburg. It proved a remarkable success, as it was wholly unexpected, so soon after an apparent abandonment of that field. The expedition was gone ten days, and on its return Col. Ellet sent a detailed report to the War Department of the operations of the expedition, and the part taken by his boats and men. The following was his report :

Steamer *Ram* *Switzerland*,
Off Helena, Ark., August 24, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

I have the honor to inform you that on Saturday, the 16th inst., by previous arrangement made with Captain Phelps of the gun-boat *Flotilla*, I left Helena, Ark., with four of my rams in company with that officer and three gun-boats, two regiments of infantry and a section of field artillery and a small detachment of cavalry from General Curtis's command, all under General Woods, in two transport steamers, to make a reconnoissance down the river as far as Vicksburg. When within twenty-five miles of that city, in McIliken's Bend, we came suddenly on a boat lying at the bank, and an encampment of the enemy on the shore close at hand. We immediately landed and took possession of the steamboat and encampment, the enemy having fled precipitately, without firing a gun. The steamboat was loaded with arms, some 5,000 and more of Enfield rifles and muskets, a large amount of ammunition, and a great many boxes filled with accoutrements, most of which were said to have been destined for Little Rock, Ark. We captured the camp equipage, tents, arms, horses, mules, wagons, for a camp of 1,000 men, besides other supplies, and took about 40 prisoners. After securing all the property of value we proceeded to within a short distance of Vicksburg, and then with my three lightest draught rams, each having a detachment from Col. Wood's command of 100 men on them, preceded by Captain Phelps in the *Benton* and followed by Captain Gwin, of the *Mound City*, we proceeded up the Yazoo River. At Haines' Bluff, 17 miles from the Mississippi River, we captured six pieces of ordnance—two 42-pounders, 2 34-pounders, one 12-pounder brass coast howitzer, with a large amount of ammunition, powder, shot and shell—besides some muskets and camp stores. We took on board everything of much value, and destroyed the remainder. The four large guns were too heavy for us to handle without better preparations, and we were compelled to burst them. The enemy, although in considerable force, were prevented from offering any resistance, in consequence of the fire from the gun-boats, which kept them at a respectful distance, while we accomplished our purpose. We then proceeded up the river to the mouth of the Big Sunflower, when the water became so shallow that the gun-boats and *Monarch* could proceed no farther. I sent the *Sampson* and *Lioness* up the Sunflower, which they succeeded in ascending a distance of 20 miles, to within 5 miles

of Lake George, where the enemy have a number of fine gun-boats secreted. They were obliged to return, the water becoming too shallow for them to proceed farther. We all returned to the fleet in the Mississippi River, after an absence of two days and nights.

I left the *Monarch* in command of Serget. E. W. Bartlett to assist the *Bragg* left by Phelps to guard the mouth of the Yazoo River, and prevent any further communication from that river with Vicksburg. We then started up the river, meeting with no interruption until we reached Greenville, when a body of the enemy was discovered and driven away by a few well directed shells from the gun-boats. I then left the fleet in the Switzerland and proceeded in the advance to Helena without further interruption.

Very respectfully your ob't servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Lieut. Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

The arms captured were intended for Hinduan's forces at Little Rock. They were enroute from the interior of Mississippi, via the Yazoo, and the boat carrying them had arrived late in the night, before the expedition pounced upon them.

Careful instructions were given the *Monarch*, to avoid the possibility of loss from surprise by night, or by the treachery of pretended rebel deserters, and her cruising course as consort of the *Bragg* was limited to the river, from the mouth of the Yazoo 40 miles up toward Helena. The *LANCASTER* was soon after added to this patrol, whose duty it was made to cut off communication from the Yazoo to Vicksburg, or across the Mississippi. The gunboats co-operated, in this patrol, which was maintained very effectively during the remainder of August. Toward the close of August, Master R. H. Porter, of the *SAMPSON* resigned, and was at once relieved.

During this period the *Lioness* was making a trip to Cairo, and met with a singular and unfortunate occurrence in the loss of two of her seamen, by drowning. When nearing Memphis at mid-day, one of them, John Rector, a deckhand, was drawing a bucket of water, and slipped and fell overboard. The alarm was at once given, and the wheel stopped. A yawl was lowered and sent immediately to the scene, but he sank before the rescuers could reach him. On the following day another of the deck crew, George Shubert, was seen to fall overboard, and in spite of all the efforts of his comrades, drowned when help was almost within reach of him. Both men were skillful

river men and good swimmers, and their fate was much deplored. They had shipped at New Albany.

But the rebels were now engaged in a systematic guerrilla warfare, and scarce a day passed that they were not heard from at some point on one side of the river or the other. Their attacks were always made from secreted and defensible positions, in woods, or behind levees, and the first the passing boat would know of their presence would be the letting loose of a section, or whole battery, of field artillery, and often supported by battalions of riflemen, and generally their greatest damage was effected by the first fire. For this sort of warfare neither the gunboats nor the rams were sufficient. When attacked they usually succeeded in driving the enemy away, but his work was practically over with the first fire, and whatever injury he could thus inflict was accomplished. He could quickly slip out of harm's way, secure in knowing that he was in no danger from a landing force, as neither class of vessels had such a force available. Occasionally, as on the expedition just described, a plan of co-operation with some portion of the army was possible, and it was the presence and assistance of such a command that gave success to the movement.

Col. Ellet became impressed with the idea that for the new situation on the Mississippi, a new system of conducting warfare was necessary. In fact, that a river force was needed, that could move quickly on its own vessels, independent of other army commands, and of navy movements, and landing with a sufficient force of mounted men, pursue and capture or disperse these guerrilla forces of the enemy, wherever found. His ideas and plans were communicated to the War Secretary, and received careful consideration. At this time, though unknown to him, Col. Ellet's promotion was being considered. The distinguished service rendered by him and his fleet, on many occasions, was soon to be rewarded.

While the fleet was yet at Helena, the commander's attention was called to the failure of officers on one of the rams to comply with orders, previously given, in regard to serving the food of the soldiers. The following characteristic order was at once issued, addressed to the officer in command of the *MOXARCH*:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*,
Off Helena, Ark., September 3rd, 1862.

Lieut. E. W. Bartlett, Commanding Monarch:

The commander of the fleet learns with regret that his order for the soldiers on all the boats to eat in the cabins of their respective boats, the same provisions, prepared in the same way, and at the same table with the officers, has been disregarded on board the *Monarch*. He wishes it understood that this order is not a gratuity on his part, but is dictated from a sense of justice. The private soldier has without doubt a better legal right to whatever subsistence supplies are purchased for the fleet than any officer in the service upon it. Then, whatever he does not get he is wrongfully deprived of. The Lt. Col. commanding therefore requires that his former order upon this subject be put into immediate effect upon the *MONARCH*.

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Lt. Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

During this stay of the fleet at Helena the *QUEEN* was, on request of Commodore Davis, ordered to convoy a fleet of transports, loaded with prisoners, from Cairo to Vicksburg, and as she was about to proceed (September 6) upon this duty Col. Ellet issued very strict instructions to her Commander (Lieut. Bartlett) to allow no passengers on board, unless provided with a pass from Col. Ellet or in his absence, Fleet Surgeon, Major Robarts; and at all times to maintain the most vigilant guard, and allow no communication between soldiers or boatmen and the prisoners. The *QUEEN* was to follow, and fly the same white signal displayed by the gunboat in the lead. When the *LANCASTER* was reached the *QUEEN* was to communicate orders to her commander, Chas. R. Ellet. This duty was performed satisfactorily. Before the *QUEEN*'s return, Col. Ellet, with several of the lighter rams, had left for Cairo, for much needed repairs. Several of the rams were in bad condition, especially their engines and boilers, and it was found necessary to send them to Cairo, or Mound City, for this purpose. Leaving a portion of the fleet below under Medical Cadet Charles Rivers Ellet, who had on several occasions given evidence of remarkable coolness and nerve, and in whom his uncle had every confidence, Col. Ellet with the other vessels moved up the river. While this part of the fleet was ascending the river the *SWITZERLAND*, which was the heaviest draft vessel of the whole fleet, got aground a

short distance above Fort Pillow, and all efforts by the other boats to pull her off the bar proved unavailing. Col. Ellet thereupon (September 10) transferred his headquarters from the *SWITZERLAND*, and proceeded with the other boats, leaving Lieut. Crandall in command of the *SWITZERLAND* and *FULTON*, with 1st Master Dyer in charge of the work of lighting the *SWITZERLAND* by removal of her heavy casemating. Instructions were followed in both the work, and guarding against possible attack by night or day, and at length the boat was once more afloat. Her casemating was then restored and both proceeded to join the others at Cairo.

Before leaving Helena, Col. Ellet had written this letter to Quartermaster Brooks:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, off Helena, Ark., August 30, 1862.

Capt. James Brooks, Q. M., U. S.:

Dear Sir: Your two letters from Washington City, the last dated August 20th, have been received. I regret that your mission has been so barren of the results desired, but perhaps it is for the best. It was an unfortunate period to approach the Secretary, for he must be pressed to death with the momentous issues that are occurring in Virginia.

I approve of your suggestions to get rid of three of my stern wheel boats, and will take immediate steps to do it. The *Mingo*, *Lioness* and *Fulton* will probably be the ones that I shall dispose of. They are of very little use to me now, and would lessen our expenses very materially. I will in this way be able to discharge a good many worthless parties, and retain from the boats turned over, such as are worth keeping.

I am sorry that the Secretary seems inclined to ignore the question of prize money, but that will do, at any subsequent period, to revive. As I have his dispatch authorizing my brother to promise this additional pay, it will be hard for him to get over it. If they should in their wisdom conclude to transfer the Ram Fleet over to the navy, it will promptly close my services with it. I never will permit myself to be made subject to Davis, after what has occurred between us.

I will at once make arrangements to send the three boats up to you at Cairo; perhaps I will come up myself. The *Switzerland* requires considerable repairs, and this change can be effected, and the repairs all made, at the same time. I will telegraph to you immediately upon my arrival at Cairo, and will hope to see you there as soon as possible. I am now waiting the arrival of the *Queen* and as soon as she comes I will send her forward with the *Sampson* to join the balance of the fleet above Vicksburg, under command of my nephew, while I proceed with the other vessels to Cairo, to effect the changes, and transfer the boats over to you. You have probably heard be-

fore this of our recent trip to Vicksburg, and up the Yazoo river, and of its success. We had the company of the gun-boats and some troops, and made a first rate trip of it.

Please present my respects to Mrs. Brooks and believe me very truly and sincerely your obedient servant and friend.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Lieut. Col. Commanding Ram Fleet.

Commodore Porter now succeeded Davis in command of the gun-boat fleet, under the change effected by Congress in transferring the entire gunboat and mortar flotilla of the Mississippi, from the War, to the Navy Department. Allusion has already been made to the divided opinion at Washington as to the proper control of the Mississippi River Ram Fleet. Secretary Stanton had a special care of the interests of this arm of service, brought into existence under his own fostering care, and of whose success he was justly proud, and his influence caused this fleet to be excepted from the operation of the transfer. The President, no doubt, under the representations of naval authorities close at hand, exercised his prerogative as commander in chief of all arms of the service and issued the order, a month or so later, distinctly requiring Ellet to report to and act under Rear Admiral Porter.

The promptness and readiness of the rams left below, to undertake any enterprise, or co-operate in any aggressive movement, won for them and their officers and men, and especially for the youthful commander, the warmest commendation of the Admiral. The rams were fleet and active vessels, as compared with the heavy, slow-going gunboats, and were frequently called on to act as convoys to transports carrying supplies or passengers. Of this latter class there were now many—officers and men going or returning—also wives of officers, and many civilians, government agents, and army correspondents. The sanitary commission had somewhat later, many officers and agents, continually going and coming, in carrying on its work for relief of the sick and wounded.

In his history Admiral Porter makes special mention of the service thus rendered by the rams during this period, as scouts and convoys for transports, and vessels of all classes, when in need of help in getting past places where guerrillas were known to be operat-

ing. Although not intended, nor adequately equipped, for such service, no ram commander ever hesitated to run the gauntlet, placing the consort in tow on the side opposite the enemy, and thus partly shielding its boilers and engines from shot and shell, and taking the brunt of the fire itself. Thus they generally succeeded in making a safe run, and even inflicting some damage upon the enemy, by the rapid fire of the two or three rifled guns they carried. But they were not always so fortunate, being frequently penetrated by shot from the attacking force, and the fire of small arms, supporting these attacks, was often a serious matter, both to the boat's crew, and to the men at the guns. Details of only a few of the many incidents of this character, occurring during the ensuing months, are preserved in official reports, and one of these is here given, as a sample of the work performed by the rams. On September 12, General Prentiss at Helena requested that a ram be sent down, to cooperate with Col. Hovey, in an expedition he had undertaken. The QUEEN had just returned, and Maj. Roberts at once sent her to perform the duty. Medical Cadet Ellet joined her enroute and took command. The following is his report of the expedition:

U. S. Ram Queen of the West, off Helena, Ark., Sept. 20, 1862.

Lieut. Col. Alfred W. Ellet, Commanding Ram Fleet:

Sir: I have the honor to report to you that while returning yesterday with the Queen of the West from Eunice Landing in company with two transports, the Iatan and Alhambra under the command of Lieut. Col. C. E. Lippincott, we were fired upon in the bend above Bolivar. The enemy had collected a force of 700 men and three field pieces, at this point, where the course of the channel renders it necessary for boats to run for several miles within a few yards of the bank. They intended to attack the fleet unexpectedly, as it passed through, but a fugitive negro had brought us full information of their plans and position. The three boats, at the suggestion of Col. Lippincott, were brought through the bend lashed together, the Queen occupying the inside position. When within about 40 yards of the bank, the enemy opened a heavy fire upon us of minie balls, cannister and round shot, riddling the Queen in every direction. Her guns, which were worked with great skill and bravery by Lieut. Callahan and his detachment of artillerymen, silenced one of the enemy's pieces, and threw shells which burst in the very midst of the guerrillas. The sharpshooters of the Queen and the infantry of the transports kept up a constant fire on the rifle-men of the enemy, whose loss must necessarily have been heavy. The fight lasted for twenty minutes, during which one man on the Queen was killed, and another dangerously wounded.

Both of the men were gunners belonging to Lieut. Callahan's detachment. The Jatan lost two men killed. A few of the sharpshooters received slight injuries. The men all behaved very well. The enemy had intended to attack the fleet at two other points, but failed to do so; their losses having been probably much more severe than they had anticipated.

Very Respectfully,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET.

Medical Cadet Commanding Division Ram Fleet.

While events of this character were in progress along the upper river, a somewhat different, but not less interesting course of operations, was in progress below. Farragut had established a patrol for that part of the river below Baton Rouge, to which place Gen. Williams' force had withdrawn on leaving the vicinity of Vicksburg. Here he had fortified as best he could, with the small force at command. The rebels now began the concentration of a considerable army in the rear of Baton Rouge, and it was moved by rapid marches, on separate roads, to attack the place from the rear, while the rebel gunboats "Webb" and "Music" were to come out of Red River, and the ram "Arkansas" go down from Vicksburg, and engage any federal vessels found near, and then attack the works from the river, all acting in concert, and according to a prearranged plan. These movements were in progress at the beginning of August, and culminated in the battle of the 5th. On the river near were the *Essex*, *Sumpter*, *Cayuga*, *Kinco* and *Katahdin*—the first two from Davis' gunboat fleet—and the other three small vessels of the Gulf Squadron. A few miles above were the rebel boats "Webb" and "Music," the former a ram of formidable proportions, awaiting the promised coming of the redoubtable "Arkansas." Upon the co-operation of these boats Gen. Breckenridge relied for the success of the attack on Baton Rouge. But the Union gunboats alone appeared on the scene, and as the battle raged, they poured an annoying fire from positions both above and below the town, upon the rear attacking force. The "Arkansas" had started at the time arranged, but without her gallant commander (Capt. Brown) who was sick, and left behind. She had not moved far, when it was found her engines were not working properly, causing some delay. But she went on, in a crippled condition, till she was joined by her consorts. Soon after she again became unmanageable, and it was found necessary to make a landing, some miles above the

scene of the conflict in which they were to have taken part. Thus the day passed, and the battle was lost by the Confederates, after a bloody conflict, and great losses on both sides, including the death of the gallant Williams, himself. Finding the "Arkansas" powerless to proceed, or take part in the conflict, the other two rebel boats bade a hasty adieu to the scene, and made the best possible time—to their haven of safety, up Red River.

The destruction of the "Arkansas" by her own crew was now inevitable, whenever the Federals should appear, which they did next morning. After replying to a few of the first shots aimed at her by the *Essex*, she was set on fire and abandoned by her crew, who escaped to shore. She was soon a mass of flame, and floated from her moorings. Shortly after, came the explosion of her magazine, which blew to fragments, and an inglorious ending, what had been the best hope and reliance of the rebels for regaining the Mississippi. There was general rejoicing when the news of the destruction of the "Arkansas" became known at the North, as she had once proven herself well nigh invulnerable. A corresponding disappointment and regret was felt by the Confederates at her loss.

Admiral Farragut, at New Orleans, learned the night of the 5th, of the joint attack on Baton Rouge, and at once started with the *Hartford* and five other vessels for the scene, arriving at noon on the 7th—the day after the "Arkansas" had met her fate. The opening sentence of his dispatch of that date to the Secretary of the Navy is characteristic, and reads:

"It is one of the happiest moments of my life that I am enabled 'to inform the Department of the destruction of the Ram 'Arkansas.'"
In the "literature" of this affair, which of course includes the official report of the officer commanding the *Essex*, appears a graphic account of this "conflict" with the disabled and helpless ram, in which "incendiary shells" and "bursting flames" play a conspicuous part, and his continued bombardment prevented the crew from extinguishing the flames until the floating wreck was sent into fragments by the explosion of her own magazines. The well authenticated facts of this final chapter of the career of this formidable craft are as given above. And from these facts it is very clear that the injury she received from the stroke of the QUEEN at the Vicksburg wharf, was mortal, for at

the first attempt to put her under a full head of steam, her disabling injury showed itself, and put her out of the fight. What was supposed to be fear, and hesitancy when only five miles from the scene of conflict, was the utter breakdown of her machinery, and of course her overthrow was then inevitable.

The boastful claims of the *Essex* Commander, in his report of destroying the "Arkansas," were soon after demolished by an official inquiry, which resulted in his retirement from the service in disgrace.

But Admiral Farragut's gratulations at the disappearance of the "last rebel ironclad on the Mississippi," were rather premature, for the "Webb" (while not ironclad) was a well protected craft, of the genus ram, and was yet to be reckoned with, as we shall see later on.

A communication from Col. Ellet at Cairo, to the Secretary of War, read in the light of events we have thus briefly sketched, shows that officer's grasp of the needs of the situation. He strongly urges the need of at least one well-built and protected ram, capable of withstanding a heavy fire, without danger of destruction to her boilers, or machinery. His appeal, in the light of subsequent events, seems almost a prophecy, in its presentation of the vulnerable character of his vessels—any one of which, if placed *hors-de-combat*, under the guns of an enemy's battery, might easily be destroyed or captured. He could scarcely have put the case more forcefully had he with prophetic vision beheld the scene of the loss of the *QUEEN*, a few months later, under the guns of Fort De Russy. Though not generally known, it is nevertheless true, that in response to Ellet's appeal, the construction of a vessel was authorized, and work pressed rapidly, but the changes in the war situation, and subsequent transfer of the western war vessels from the War to the Navy Department, diverted it from the purpose intended, so that the boat never became a part of Ellet's command. The communication referred to is as follows:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, Cairo, Sept. 28, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

I have the honor to call your attention to a matter that has before been presented to your notice, and that in my opinion is of very grave importance to the public interest—viz., the providing without delay an ironclad fleet of rams to meet the enemy's new fleet that without doubt will appear upon these waters with the next flood. You are aware of the frail nature of the fleet of wooden boats that I have the honor at present to command. It is

no detraction from the eminent services that they have rendered the country to say that it was mainly attributable to the ignorance of the enemy as to their strength and to the bold audacity of their former commander. There seems no room to doubt that the enemy are now busily engaged in building a new fleet of formidable rams and gun-boats up the Yazoo River and its tributaries, besides what they may be doing up the Arkansas and White Rivers, with the evident purpose of resuming possession of the Mississippi River with the rise of water in the spring. The reports to this effect are so constant and uniform that it does seem to me the part of prudence to take warning and make suitable provision while there is yet time to meet the probable emergency. It is a fact that few have the presumption now to dispute that our flat bottomed slow gun-boats are in no way equal to contend against the formidable rams and gun-boats that the enemy have heretofore produced and are likely to again bring against us. I trust that it shall be regarded as no disparagement to the brave officers and men of the gun-boats, nor of the former valuable services of the boats themselves, to say that the latter are in no way suitable to meet the new order of things soon to be produced. It is in view of these, to me, plain facts that I take the liberty of urging upon your notice again, the great importance of providing one or more boats of strength and speed equal at least to what we know the enemy have heretofore produced and are capable of re-producing. The disastrous and most mortifying raid of the "Arkansas" should not soon be forgotten. Recent developments seem to show conclusively that her final destruction was partially, at least, owing to the severe shock she received from the Queen of the West, which disarranged her engines and caused her machinery to break down. If, at the time of that action, the Queen had been ironclad, so that she could, with partial impunity have for ten minutes longer, endured the terrific fire she was exposed to, the "Arkansas" would never again left her anchorage. I trust that you will excuse me for the liberty of thus addressing you and in apology can only say that the question seems to me of such grave importance, the preparation so far as I can see, so small to meet it, that I have felt emboldened from my knowledge of your energy to provide to meet emergencies, to address you this letter. With sentiments of highest esteem and unlimited confidence, I remain very respectfully, your obedient servant.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Col. Commanding Ram Fleet.

At this period, in the course of events, Colonel Ellet received a communication from the commander of the Naval Flotilla below, the contents of which can only be gathered from the subjoined reply, which is given here on account of the light it throws upon the generous character of the Ram Fleet Commander. We shall, further on, speak of the subject of Prize money, in a separate paragraph.

Steam Ram Switzerland, Mound City, Ill., Sept. 29, 1862.

Capt. S. S. Phelps, Comd'g Gunboat Flotilla, Etc.:

Dear Sir:—Your letter of 24th inst. was received yesterday, and I hastened this morning to dispose of the captured piece, as you directed, delivered it to Admiral Davis in person on the naval wharfoat. I had retained both guns subject to your order, and feel much obliged to you for your impartial disposition of them. I shall mount the 24-pounder on the Switzerland as soon as I can get her repairs completed.

Respecting the names of my men engaged in the recent expedition up Yazoo River, and also those who participated in the fight before Memphis, I hardly know what to do in the matter. Many of these men have been discharged from the service, and gone. I will leave the matter until I see you. I have never had any idea of realizing prize money in the same way and proportion with you gentlemen of the regular navy, and was much surprised at the contents of your letter. I had reason, however, to expect *something*, from promises obtained from Secretary Stanton to that effect; but supposed that it would come by altogether a different channel. I shall regret exceedingly if by your generous intercession in our behalf, we shall come to be regarded as having appropriated what properly belongs to other parties.

I am very sorry that I did not have the pleasure of seeing you on your visit to Mound City, but as you rightly guess, I was enjoying myself hugely at home. With sentiments of sincere esteem, I remain,

Very respectfully, etc.,

Your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

On the 6th the following letter of instructions was sent below, its contents revealing an emergency occasioned by alleged misconduct of an officer of the fleet:

Steam Ram Switzerland, Mound City, Ill., October 6th, 1862.

Charles Rivers Ellet, Medical Cadet:

You will proceed on first steamboat for Memphis, Tenn., and take command of steam ram Lancaster, and without delay bring that boat to Mound City, and report to me upon your arrival. You will permit no property to be removed from off the boat by anybody. You will give into Lieut. Russell's own hands the letter I give you, placing him under arrest, and observe that he confines himself to the limits of the steamboat's quarters, after he receives my written orders to that effect. You will use all expedition possible to return as quickly as possible.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Col. Comd'g Ram Fleet.

No other proceedings in this matter appear to have been taken, after the arrival of the *LANCESTER*, other than simply to order the above named officer to rejoin his regiment, the 63d Ill.

On the 7th Col. Ellet informed the Department of progress of repairs, and asked permission to come to Washington, on business for the fleet.

At this date Col. Ellet, through Captain Brooks then in Washington, renewed certain recommendations for promotions in the ram fleet, as follows:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, Mound City, Ill., Oct. 12th, 1862.

Capt. James Brooks, U. S. Quartermaster, Steam Ram Fleet:—

Dear Sir: It has become necessary for the efficiency of this service, that I should have some ranking officers to aid me in the management of this fleet. I have asked by telegraph of the Hon. Secretary of War the appointment of a second in command, but have received no answer. I have since requested *twice* leave of absence to visit Washington to present this matter, and others of importance for his consideration, but received no reply to my request. I desire that you will proceed at once to Washington City and present this necessity to the Hon. Secretary of War in person. I would regard it as a great privilege to be permitted to name those whom I would recommend to fill these positions. Men who from their acquaintance with the service, and for gallant conduct seem specially entitled to creditable notice. For second in command of the fleet, I should prefer my nephew, Charles Rivers Ellet. For third in command, John Lawrence, assistant surgeon of the fleet. I would desire to have Capt. Asgill Connor, of Co. —, 18th Regt. of Ill. Inf., Vol., detailed with his entire company to serve on the fleet. And would recommend 1st Sergt. E. W. Bartlett, Co. I 59th Regt. Ill. Inf., Regt. Vol. Corporal Edward C. Ellet, Co. I, 59th Regt. Ill. Inf., Regt. Vol. Private E. W. Sutherland, Co. I 63rd Regt. Ill. Inf., Regt. Vol.: all for gallant conduct, for promotion to lieut. vacancies.

Very respectfully, etc.,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

The work of repairs on the rams was pushed with all possible dispatch at Mound City, but it was not until the middle of October that their commander was able to report them again ready for duty.

The new machinery required had to be obtained at Pittsburg, and there was great difficulty in securing it, as Army operations at that time taxed the foundries for railroad engines. The archives disclose the fact that Grant had obtained from Halleck an order, expressly

giving this work precedence over that in progress for Ellet's rams, thus causing at least a month's additional delay.

In a letter accompanying the report from below (given on a previous page) Colonel Ellet informs the Secretary of War of his readiness to resume operations at the front. It is brief and to the point as follows:

Steam Ram *Switzerland*, Mound City, Ill., October 14, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

I have the honor to forward to you the report of my nephew, Medical Cadet Chas. Rivers Ellet, respecting his late expedition down the river to near Vicksburg. He informs me that his boats were repeatedly fired into by the bands of guerillas from the shore, and had several sharp engagements. My boats are now all in good repair, and I shall resume my efforts to break up these bands immediately.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

The new Admiral had now arrived at Cairo, and at once proceeded to unbosom himself to the ram fleet commander, as follows:

Cairo, October 25, 1862.

A. W. Ellet, Lt. Col. U. S. A., Com'dg Ram Fleet:

In a few weeks now the Yazoo will be open, and I hear that the rebels have fitted out some new rams. I can only suggest to you that it would be well to have your vessels ready to meet any emergency, in case the rams get out or your vessels are turned over to the navy. I shall start them off as soon as I get them, if they are turned over to me. You see the importance of having one organization here. I have urged the Navy Department very strongly to take these vessels according to the law, for with them I could feel secure about rams below. Our old turtles are only fit to lie still and fire away at a fort. They take two steamers to move them about. I am urging the Naval Brigade very strongly, and hope to see you at the head of it.

Yours very respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER.
Act. Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

There is no record of Col. Ellet's reply.

At this date (October 20) came the instruction from Secretary Stanton, saying to the ram fleet Commander: "The ram fleet was not included in the transfer of the gunboat fleet to the Navy Department. Its disposition was left for further consideration. You will retain command as heretofore, until further orders."

On the 6th of November Ellet was appointed a Brigadier General, and was summoned to Washington to confer as to the appointment of his subordinates, and the details of the river brigade, which were wrought out in several War office interviews, according to Ellet's general plan.

An early order was secured from the President by watchful Navy interests, touching the proposed marine command. It bears date November 7, and reads as follows: "Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C.—Ordered that Brig. Gen. Ellet report to Rear Admiral Porter for instructions, and act under his direction until otherwise ordered by the War Department."

Ellet's recommendations for staff and other appointments were followed. Lient. Crandall, late of the *Lioness*, was made Capt. and A. A. G. and at once proceeded to St. Louis, and established recruiting headquarters for the new command, at 109 North 3d street, whither the General followed a few days later. From November (1862) until about the middle of March following, Gen. Ellet and staff were engaged in the work of forming the Marine Brigade, and getting the boats in readiness for its use.

Among the appointments for the brigade, was that of Medical Cadet, Charles Rivers Ellet, to be a Colonel of the line. Being already experienced in ram fleet service he was assigned to its command, with Asst. Surgeon J. W. Lawrence to be Major, and second in command; this to be the arrangement till the brigade should be formed and the command concentrated in lower waters.

The need of more adequate defense for the rams against attacks from guerrillas had caused repeated requests made for an increase of their force of sharpshooters, and at length came notice from headquarters, of a permanent addition to the ram defenders, as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., December 11, 1862.

Brig. Gen. Ellet, Cairo, Ill.:—

Gen'l Grant has been ordered to assign Co. K, 18th Ill. to the Ram Fleet. Communicate with him in regard to location of the company, and when it will join the fleet.

H. W. HALLECK,

General in Chief.

The officers and men thus made part of Ellet's command were assigned to the *SWITZERLAND*, and were identified thenceforth with the stirring events in which their vessel took a conspicuous and honorable part.

Shortly after Col. Charles R. Ellet had assumed command, Admiral Porter, then at Cairo, requested that, as soon as possible, two of the best rams be sent to the front. In response, the *QUEEN* and *SWITZERLAND* were soon on their way—others following, as fast as made ready.

An amusing occurrence happened at Cairo, during this period, which created quite a sensation, and brought the new Admiral into rather unenviable prominence. At 1 a. m., December 2 he sent a messenger in great haste up to Mound City (where Col. C. R. Ellet's rams were) asking that one, carrying a gun, be sent "without one moment's delay," with every man on board that he could raise, and if he had no guns, the Admiral would place howitzers on her. "Utmost dispatch needed," as Hickman had been taken by the enemy! Ellet at once dispatched the *LANCASTER* (Lient. Bartlett) to the Admiral. The report of the Lieutenant, on his return next day, tells the story of the "rescue of Hickman."

On Board U. S. S. R. *Lancaster*, off Mound City, Dec. 3rd, 1862.

Col. Chas. R. Ellet, Com'dg Ram Fleet: -

Sir:—Agreeable to your order of December 1st, I took command of the *Lancaster*, and on the morning of the 2nd, at 2 o'clock, proceeded to Cairo and reported to Admiral D. D. Porter, as ready for duty. From him I received the following orders: "Proceed to Columbus where you will find the 'Tyler, Lient. Com'dg Pritchett if she is not there, proceed to Hickman, 'where Lt. Com'dg Pritchett will communicate my orders to you, and you will 'if necessary, co-operate with him to carry them out. (Signed) D. D. Porter, 'Act. Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron." In accordance to the above orders, I proceeded to Hickman where I found the *Tyler* and communicated with Lt. Pritchett, and from him learned the following particulars. The captain in command of the Post at Hickman, on the night of December 1st, desired to send dispatches to Cairo, and signaled for a transport which was passing up, to land, but as the boat passed on without stopping, he ordered his men to fire upon her, which they did with muskets. The captain of the boat supposing them to be the enemy, proceeded to Columbus and reported to Gen. David, that Hickman had been taken by the enemy, and that he was fired upon by them.

We lay at anchor off Hickman till 10 a. m., then took the Tyler in tow and proceeded to Cairo, arrived at that place at 7 p. m., then came to Mound City where we arrived at 10 p. m.

I remain your most obedient servant.

LT. E. W. BARTLETT.

Meantime the QUEEN (Major J. W. Lawrence) and the SWITZERLAND (Captain E. W. Sutherland) had proceeded down the river, without incident worth mention, till, in passing Pawpaw Island, the former vessel, whose sailing orders were to follow in wake of the latter, was grounded, in an effort of the pilot to find a short cut channel. For this accident and delay Capt. Sutherland solely blamed Pilot McKay at the wheel. The following characteristic "report" was made by the ranking officer of the two Rams, who had been a surgeon of the fleet, and was a most excellent man, but not much given to military style:

Ram Switzerland, Mouth Yazoo River, Dec. 5th, 1862.

Col. Chas. Rivers Ellet:-

Dear Sir:—I arrived at this point at 5 o'clock this p. m., and have made my report to Capt. Walke. He seems much of a gentleman. His instructions to me are to be on the alert as he expects a rebel ram, and if one comes in sight to "pitch in"—very concise, to the point and not to be misunderstood. I will obey his instructions as near as possible. We have had no trouble since we left Helena except that we lost our anchor last night, just as we stopped. The chain parted. I think it was through bad management. The Queen is now aground a few miles above us at Pawpaw Island. The pilot disobeyed, for his orders were to follow directly in our wake. But instead of doing that he went to one side, and the consequence is he is aground. As it was getting late, and I was close to the fleet, and it being dangerous for us to run in where they were after night, I thought I had better come down and make my report. Capt. Walke very kindly sent the Marmora (a light draft boat) up to her assistance. If she fails to pull her off I will go up in the morning and do what I can.

I have procured contrabands enough for deckhands. If you will allow me, I would suggest that you bring down several anchors with you, when you come, as each boat should have at least three—two large and one small one. We are attached to the Baron de Kalb, tonight, and Capt. Walke said he thought he could spare me an anchor till you come down. I spoke to you about castings for our stove: they had not come to Helena when we left. I wish that the first ram that comes down would stop at Memphis, go to the foundry and see if the castings are there, and, if they have been sent to

Helena, would stop there and get them: for we are needing them very much, as the stove is dangerous in the condition it is now in.

If that Rebel ram comes along here, you may expect to hear of it, or the Switzerland, being sunk, for I will go into her at all hazards. I forgot to state that we have had but one pilot all the way, nearly, Roach having metastasis from parotitis, but he is getting better. Capt. Garvey I think one of the best pilots I ever saw, and a good man, every way. The more I see of him the better I like him. I think he is brave, and I think I can depend on him, when it comes to a fight. I begin to feel that the crew has confidence in me now. I shall not close this now but wait till I have a chance to send it, and then add some more.

Your obedient servant, etc.,

J. W. LAWRENCE,

Major Commanding.

Later, December 7th, 1862.

I add a few more lines this morning. The Queen was got off by the Marmora. McKay run her aground. I have no confidence in him as a pilot at all. We succeeded in getting an anchor, but had some little difficulty with one of the under officers about it. It would take too much room or I would give you a full statement of it. I will tell you all when I see you. So far I have failed to get any supplies from the navy. At Helena, I had to appoint Capt. Sutherland quartermaster *pro tem*, and get supplies from the army. I told the naval officers that the Admiral promised me supplies from the navy, but they said they had none for me, so I had to get of the army, the best I could. Capt. Walke was much pleased that the rams came down, for he was uneasy about the Rebel rams, from what I could learn. In fact, he had anchored his fleet at Milliken's Bend till we came, and then he came here. So he has some confidence in the rams, at least. The weather is very pleasant here, and if those rams do not come up we will have nothing to do. The Yazoo is too low for us to go up. The Marmora has been up, but discovered nothing. But I must close. I will try and keep you posted. Hoping to hear from you soon.

J. W. LAWRENCE.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have just seen Capt. Walke, and he tells me that he will furnish me with supplies, fresh meat, etc. He has given me instructions how to act in case of an attack, either from land or water. He seems to have great confidence in the rams, in case of an attack from water. We are to push right into them, if they make their appearance, without waiting for signals, orders, or anything of the kind, and you may rest assured that my boat will do her duty. But I don't think there is any danger of an attack at all. The river is falling.

J. W. L.

A communication from the same officer dated the 8th, incloses Capt. Sutherland's charge of wilful carelessness against Pilot McKay (who had two or three times, on the way down, got the *QUEEN* into similar difficulty) and mentions that the gunboat fleet numbered seven vessels; that the *Marmora* had captured a lot of dressed hogs up the Yazoo, designed for Vicksburg—giving two to each of the Rams.

The Admiral having requested a list of the vessels of the Ram Fleet, was thus explicitly informed by the commander, which furnishes us important historical data for the period.

Steam Ram *Monarch*, Cairo, Ill., December 4th, 1862.

Admiral:—

Your reply to my communication of December 4th has been received. The following is a list of the names of rams under my command, and of the names of their commanders:

1. *Switzerland*, Major John W. Lawrence, Commanding.
2. *Queen of the West*, Capt. E. W. Sutherland.
3. *Monarch*, Lieut. E. W. Bartlett.
4. *Lancaster*, Lieut. W. F. Warren.
5. *Lioness*, First Master Thos. O'Reilly.
6. *Horner*, First Master Robert Dalzell.
7. *Fulton*, First Master S. Cadman.

The *Horner* has been, for several months, up the Ohio River, and is now undergoing repairs. She is employed to carry stores for the ram fleet, and is in the charge of Capt. Geo. Q. White, Assistant Quartermaster. I have sent the *Lioness* up to Caseyville, to bring down two barges of Pittsburgh coal, which are waiting at that point. I expect her return in a few days. The company of soldiers which I am expecting has not yet arrived. I shall do all that is in my power to have the rams under my command, ready for service at the earliest possible date. The *Monarch* and *Lancaster* will take on coal today, if it can be obtained.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES RIVERS ELLET,

Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

From which report it will be seen that the boats turned over to the Quartermaster Department, for transport or other service, were the stern-wheelers* *Mingo* and *Sampson*, of which no further mention will therefore appear in these pages.

The months of October and November were busy ones at the front, as both fleets were constantly occupied, between Memphis and

*The *Mingo* was transferred to the military authorities at St. Louis, Sept. 20, 1862.

Vicksburg, and in the lower Yazoo which was now kept under constant patrol. But the rebels were growing more defiant and aggressive, day by day. As a defensive measure they had mined the channel of the Yazoo, and fortified its banks, at several points, lining them with infantry supports. Any attempt to navigate it was therefore difficult and dangerous for Federal vessels to undertake.

When about to leave for the scene of operations below, Admiral Porter sent this communication to the Ram Fleet Commander at Cairo,

Cairo, Ill., Dec. 11th, 1862.

General:

I leave here for Memphis tomorrow. You had better come on, and follow down with the rams. Operations will commence at once, or shortly.

I am very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

A. R. Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

This communication, as we learn from Col. C. R. Ellet's report of 13th, reached him that day, through Cairo Postoffice. The Admiral had the day before ordered him to instruct the commanding officer of any ram there, ready for service, to report to the Admiral for duty, and the *LIONESS*, after receiving from the *LANCASTER* a supply of ammunition, was so directed, and received orders to report to Captain Walke, at the mouth of the Yazoo. At this unmilitary mode of transmitting orders to his subordinates, the young Colonel, who was diligently posting himself in military ways, was considerably nettled, but submitted with good grace. The Admiral's mental perturbation, evident in his letter to Gen. Ellet (then busy with his Brigade matters at St. Louis) was further evidenced by his informing Colonel C. R. Ellet, in one of his letters of that date, that he had written the General, and expected him to arrive there in a day or two.

A few days before the arrival of the Admiral and while the Sherman campaign upon Vicksburg, was in progress, Capt. Walke sent a naval expedition up the Yazoo, for the purpose of clearing the stream of torpedoes, utilizing two of Ellet's rams in the operations. The subjoined report of Col. C. R. Ellet, sets forth the part taken by the *QUEEN* as reported to him by her commander:

United States Ram Monarch, off Cairo, Ill., Dec. 20, 1862.

Alfred W. Ellet, Brig. Gen. Marine Brigade, St. Louis, Mo.:—

General:—I have the honor to report to you that on the 12th inst., Capt. E. W. Sutherland, commanding Steam Ram Queen of the West, was sent at his own request, by Capt. Walke, U. S. Navy, on an expedition up Yazoo River, in company with four gun-boats—the Marmora, Signal, Cairo and Pittsburgh. The object of the expedition was to remove some torpedoes, which had been placed in the channel by the enemy. Capt. Walke impressed upon Capt. Sutherland the necessity of observing the utmost caution on this dangerous enterprise, instructing him particularly not to get too near the other boats, and to avoid the middle of the channel. According to the design of Capt. Walke the Marmora and Signal, being light draught boats, were to hug the shores and take up the torpedoes; while the Queen, Cairo and Pittsburg were to protect them with their guns. While the fleet, however, was on its way up the Yazoo River, Capt. Selfridge, who commanded the expedition, and who brought up its rear in the gun-boat Cairo, frequently and peremptorily, ordered Capt. Sutherland to move faster—a command which perilled the safety of the boats ahead of the Queen, for, in that narrow and tortuous stream, if the leading boats had been compelled by some unexpected danger, such as a battery or a torpedo, suddenly to stop, or back, one of them would have been inevitably sunk by the ram. The fleet arrived in sight of the enemy's fort, and opened an irregular fire. Capt. Selfridge came alongside of the Marmora with the Cairo and inquired why they did not go ahead. The answer was, that they were right at the torpedoes; the buoys in fact were plainly visible, just before them. Capt. Selfridge then advanced himself with the Cairo, moving up the middle of the stream. The unfortunate, though natural consequence was that a torpedo immediately exploded under the Cairo, blowing her almost out of the water. She went down in about ten minutes, sinking nearly over her chimneys. Immediately after the explosion, Capt. Selfridge called for assistance. For some unexplained reason none of the gun-boats volunteered to comply with his request. Disregarding the command of several of their officers to keep away, Capt. Sutherland passed with the Queen to the side of the sinking vessel, and removed her crew, and the chief portion of their effects. He and his officers and men deserve credit for their conduct on this occasion.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES RIVERS ELLET,

Colonel Commanding.

The scene now changes, and we are to get a closer view of matters at the front, to which both Admiral Porter, and the ram fleet commander have repaired. Sherman's army has completed its disastrous campaign on the Yazoo, during which the rams were, with the gun-boats constantly employed in protecting transports and in endeavors

to clear the river of torpedoes. Col. Ellet's reports set forth a plan he devised and was ready to operate, when the whole campaign was abandoned:

U. S. Ram Monarch, January 3, 1863.

Brig. Gen'l Alfred W. Ellet, Com'dg Miss. Marine Brigade:

General:—I have the honor to report to you that on December 30, 1862, Admiral Porter accepted a plan which I proposed to him for clearing the Yazoo River of its torpedoes, and thus enable the gun-boats to get within close range of the enemy's batteries on the bluffs. My plan was, to attach to the bow of a swift and powerful steamboat, a strong frame-work, consisting of two heavy spars, 65 feet in length, firmly secured by transverse and diagonal braces, and extending 50 feet forward of the steamer's bow. A cross-piece 35 feet in length was to be bolted to the forward extremities of these spars. Through each end of this cross-piece, and through the centre a heavy iron rod, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and 10 feet long, descended into the river terminating in a hook. An intermediate hook was attached to each bar, 3 feet from the bottom. The three bars were strengthened by a light piece of timber, half way down, through which they were passed, and bolted. I proposed to secure this rake to the bow of the steam ram *Lioness*, and run her at full speed up the river. The torpedoes are sunk in the water, but the chords by which they are fired are attached to buoys, floating on the surface. My belief was that the curved hooks of the rake would catch these cords, and driven by the powerful boat, would either explode the torpedoes or tear them to pieces and break the ropes, thus rendering them harmless to succeeding vessels. As there would be at least 45 feet of water between the point of explosion and the bow of my vessel, I anticipated no danger would be done the boat. If the rake was destroyed a new one could easily be constructed. The design was to obviate the necessity of sending men out in small boats to fish for the torpedoes, under a tremendous fire from regiments of rebel sharpshooters, stationed in rifle pits along either shore. This had been the plan hitherto pursued, and found impracticable. The *Cairo* was blown up by a torpedo, while protecting the men who were searching for them. By Admiral Porter's order I commenced the construction of a rake on the night of December 30. It was finished on the following day. Great credit is due to Mr. George W. Andrews, carpenter, of the *Monarch*, for his exertions in getting it ready. He worked upon it all night, and the next day, in the water, and its speedy completion was mainly due to his efforts. We experienced great difficulty in procuring material, and were compelled to cut and haul the green timbers on the bank at night. The wood was very heavy and sank in the water. I was compelled to sustain the frame, by the strongest chimney guys I could find, bolting them through the bulwarks of the *Lioness*. When finished it worked to the greatest satisfaction, and the *Lioness* was in her place at the head of the fleet, on the night of the intended attack, awaiting orders to

move. She carried alongside in an open barge fifteen barrels of gun powder, which I was instructed by Admiral Porter to place on the raft and ignite, after reaching it. During her whole passage up, and at the raft itself, the *Lioness* would have been under the fire of the enemy's batteries. The plans of the commanding officer were changed and the attack did not take place. I returned and destroyed, by Admiral Porter's order, such portions of the raft as could not be retained. I think it is only just, however, to the 35 brave men who volunteered to accompany me on this expedition, to send you their names. I hope notwithstanding the probability that the *Lioness* would have been destroyed, that you will approve of my having proffered her and my men for the purpose required. The removal of the torpedoes was essential to the advance of the ironclads, and consequently to that of our army. I have the honor to be with highest respect, your obedient servant.

CHARLES RIVERS ELLET,

Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

A detailed report of the further operations of the *QUEEN*, was made later, by Capt. Sutherland, covering the five days (December 23-27) and is here given as of historic interest:

U. S. Ram *Queen* of the West, Mississippi River, Jan. 4, 1863.

Col. Chas. R. Ellet, Commanding Ram Fleet:

Sir: I have the honor to report the part taken by this boat in the late expedition up the Yazoo River. On the morning of December 23, I got under way in obedience to orders of Flag-officer Captain Henry Walke. This boat was preceded in order by a tug and the gun-boat *Signal*, with the gun-boat *Baron de Kalb* bringing up the rear; the object of the expedition being to clear the river of torpedoes and other obstructions and secure a landing for the army. Upon arriving at Johnson's plantation I commenced shelling the woods to protect the tug. Proceeding half a mile farther the tug suddenly received a volley of musketry, followed by successive discharges at this and the other boat. I immediately advanced with this boat, covering the tug with the rifle gun, and throwing canister from the port batteries. The enemy appeared on both sides of the river. The firing was brisk until three o'clock in the evening, when a large part of the fleet coming up, the action was discontinued. Captain Gwin of the *Benton* now assumed command, and by the courtesy of that gallant officer, this boat was permitted to lead the advance, for which favor I am the more indebted, inasmuch as he took upon himself the responsibility of deviating from the instructions of Admiral Porter, the purport of which were that the rams should remain in the rear. Early on the morning of the 24th, I reconnoitred with this boat up to the wreck of the *Cairo*, and found the river clear. The fleet moved up and the boat crossed the line of a torpedo before I discovered it. I reported it to Captain Gwin.

when he sent out several boats to remove it. While so doing the enemy fired into them such a volley as to plainly indicate the impracticability of ever destroying the torpedoes by that means. The enemy now opened a galling and severe fight on all the boats, and especially on this. My men gave three hearty cheers and returned their fire with such spirit and accuracy as to elicit repeated cheers from the flag-ship. I remained at this point to engage the enemy, and the firing was heavy and incessant on both sides, during the entire day. The other boats, at some distance in the rear, confined their efforts to the earth works at the mouth of Chickasaw Bayou, and below. The events of the 24th clearly foreshadowed the danger in fact demonstrated the impossibility of removing the torpedoes by sending out men for that purpose in open boats. The enemy were effectually sheltered in rifle pits, which extended in almost unbroken continuity, to the fort at the bluffs. The morning of the 25th, I patrolled the river from 12 o'clock until daylight with this boat, and then took the position I had the day before, and continued the fire up to the morning of the 27th, but could not succeed in driving the rebels from their works. On the 27th the command of Gen'l Steele moved up to enfilade the levees. I then advanced with this boat, the ironclad vessels, two abreast following at a distance of 400 yards, and other boats of the fleet bringing up the rear. My instructions were to cover the small boats engaged in taking up the torpedoes, and to unmask a battery supposed to be on the left bank of the river. I labored under the greatest disadvantage for the want of a glass. Advancing too far, the officer commanding signalled my recall. I could not distinguish the signals, and moved up to encounter the enemy, who appeared in heavy force on the right, with several batteries of field artillery. Observing that the fleet did not support, I turned and saw the signal of recall. I found then, that my pilot, Mr. McKay, had allowed the boat to drift into shore, and was detained half hour in getting afloat again. I reformed the fleet, and made the necessary explanation to the officer commanding. About 12 o'clock I again advanced, the other vessels following as before until, drawing the fire from the rebel fort I withdrew out of range of the enemy's guns, and thus terminated the active part taken by this boat in the expedition. For several days subsequent to this, I lay at anchor near the plantation of Benson Blake, an officer of some note in the rebel army. As most of the danger we incurred was from torpedoes and the rebel fire was met with at this plantation, I considered it proper to destroy some of the buildings, especially a valuable piece of machinery, which from its commanding position on Gascon Bayou, could have been used to annoy us, by the rebels. I directed a torpedo to be removed from the river to this building, and had it exploded with a port fire, which utterly demolished the building. You will perceive that, from Dec. 23 to 27, inclusive, this vessel was under an almost constant fire, and from the nature of the enterprise and necessity of constant vigilance, night and day, the nerve and endurance of my men were tried severely, and their bravery and perseverance deserve the highest commendation.

The officers under my command (with few exceptions) rendered me much assistance, being obedient to orders, and attentive to their duties. Mr. Townsend, engineer-in-chief, deserves particular mention for skillfully managing the engines, and at a critical moment, when the vent field was blown out of the rifle gun, he replaced it with a new one in time for the piece to render most efficient service. During the five days engaged, I fired from all the batteries 78 boxes of ammunition, and I would fain believe that we inflicted a heavy loss upon the enemy; but I can not lay the motion to my soul, as they were too well protected by their rifle-pits. The loss on this boat was none killed and one slightly wounded.

Very respectfully yours, etc.,

EDWIN W. SUTHERLAND.

Capt. Com'dg U. S. Queen of the West.

Admiral Porter at this time made a special report of the work of the rams, and of the promptness, bravery and efficiency of their officers and men. This report follows:

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, Mississippi River, Jan. 5, 1863.

Hon. Gideon Welles, Secretary of War:—

Sir: In my different communications relating to the operations on the Yazoo River I omitted to mention the services of the Ram Fleet. I intended to have made a separate report but have been unable to do so sooner. From his first connection with this squadron Col. Chas. Rivers Ellet, the immediate commander of the ram-fleet, has displayed great zeal in carrying out my orders; and when we have been threatened at difficult points, and having no vessel to send from Cairo, he has on two occasions furnished vessels at an hour's notice. When the expedition started down the river the ram-fleet was with us, and our main dependence in case we should encounter other rams. We had none of the navy proper. Although like ourselves half manned, the ram-fleet was ready to do anything required of it. In ascending the Yazoo River the Queen of the West Capt. E. W. Sutherland and Master T. O. Reilly, were very efficient in repelling the sharpshooters, their construction enabling them to fire over the banks, which our ironclads could not do. Captain Sutherland kept unceasing watch in advance of the fleet, while our boats were at work, and won golden opinions by his assiduity. On the night of December 31, when it was intended to assault the batteries by land and water, Col. Ellet took upon himself the perilous duty of running up in the Lioness, in face of the batteries, to clear out the torpedoes or break the wires, and to plant torpedoes on the raft, which had a battery at each end of it. No doubt he would have performed it or lost his life or his vessel. I have great confidence in the commander of the rams and those under him, and take this opportunity to state to the Department how highly I appreciate the commander and his associates. I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER.

Acting Read Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

It is well authenticated that the Sherman campaign against Vicksburg via Yazoo and Chickasaw was the joint plan of himself and Grant. The latter was to push his main army southward, from Corinth and Holly Springs, to hold Pemberton away from Vicksburg, while another diversion should be created by a raiding force from Curtis' army southward, under Hovey and Washburn, to strike and destroy the Vicksburg and Shreveport railroad. But after the several untoward circumstances, arising as this campaign progressed, it must be the verdict of history that it should have been abandoned. But under favoring influences at Washington there was a move on foot to organize a distinct river campaign against Vicksburg, to be under General John A. McClernand, and its formation was even then in progress. Grant and Sherman who had little confidence in McClernand's fighting qualities, were against this plan, and the Sherman campaign was hastened, though at an inopportune season, to head it off. Grant's protest to Washington led, indeed, to Halleck's assurance that McClernand would be subject to him, but as McClernand outranked Sherman, the command of this "river division," (one of the four into Grant's army was now divided by Halleck's order) would devolve upon McClernand, as soon as he should arrive. Upon the failure of Sherman's attack, followed by McClernand's arrival and assumption of command—the point at which our history has now arrived—Grant was compelled to come and take command in person. This led to the reconcentration of the army Halleck had scattered, and to the organization of a Vicksburg campaign adequate to the purpose.

To break the force of this defeat, and if possible offset its effect, an expedition had been discussed and agreed upon between Porter and Sherman, against Arkansas Post, to follow immediately, upon the withdrawal from the Yazoo. Somewhat reluctantly, Gen. McClernand, who had now arrived (January 2) and taken command, assented to the plan, and the new expedition was at once started. The gunboats and land forces on transports moved up the river, and entered the mouth of White river, proceeding thence by a cut off into the Arkansas, and up to the scene of operations. The land forces under Sherman first debarked and moved up in the rear of the fort, and the gunboats ran up, and attacked from the front. In an hour's cannon-

ade, just before night, the guns of the fort were silenced, but the *Rattler*, attempting to pass up, got tangled in piling, and was so cut up by the enemy's fire that she was compelled to retire. Gen. Churchill in command at the fort, moved out a force five miles, to meet and check Sherman, and that night Col. Dunnington, commanding the Confederate naval forces, constituting the garrison, worked heroically to repair damages and be ready for next day's conflict, which began early and was conducted with great vigor. "In a short time" says Porter's Naval History, "all the guns in the works were silenced, and the flagship *Blackhawk* was run to the bank, alongside the fort, to board it with her crew." Meantime a messenger had been sent to inform Sherman of the situation, and several of the "tinclads" accompanied by the Ram *Monarch*, were ordered by the Admiral to make their way through the obstructions to the ferry, above the fort, and thus cut off the enemy's retreat in that direction. The scene within the fort, after firing had ceased was one of unusual carnage, and the havoc among artillery horses and equipage, retained within the fort, being almost beyond description. Meantime the army had moved up and partly surrounded the fort. No further resistance was anticipated, but, as the advance approached, a volley was fired from the rear parapets, followed almost immediately by the appearance of white flags at several points. The surrender of the garrison followed, with about 6,000 men, 17 heavy guns, and 3,000 small arms. In this engagement the navy was a prime factor, although the army loss was very severe, being 129 killed, 831 wounded and 17 missing. The part taken by the ram *Monarch*, under Col. C. R. Ellet, can best be given in the report of that officer to his superior at St. Louis:

U. S. Steam Ram *Monarch*, off Arkansas Post, Jan. 12, 1863.

Brig. Gen'l Alfred W. Ellet, Com'dg Miss. Marine Brigade:

General: I have the honor to report to you that on the 9th inst., I ascended the Arkansas River in the *Monarch*, accompanying, by Admiral Porter's orders, the naval expedition against Fort Hindman. During the attack upon the fort, on the 11th instant, the *Monarch* was held up immediately in rear of the ironclad, with instructions to take the lead if a rebel ram appeared. Just before the surrender of the enemy, I received orders to pass the fort, and cut off the retreat of the enemy. This was done, and I kept on up the river for 12 miles the water then being so shallow as to render it impossible to proceed farther. The *Monarch* got aground four times as it was. I

was consequently compelled to return, to my great regret. I understood, from a prisoner we captured on the way, that there was a ferry some six miles farther up where the fleeing rebels would be able to cross. I notified commander of the light draught gun-boats of this fact on my return, but am unaware whether any steps were taken to destroy the ferry. I reported verbally to Admiral Porter the result of the expedition. Though I have no positive information to that effect, I think the prestige of the *Monarch* must have caused a considerable number of the enemy to fall into the hands of our army. We shelled the woods on our right side as we went up, and at several points saw numbers of the rebels retreating from the banks of the river.

Very respectfully,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET,

Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

While this movement was in progress the *QUEEN* and *LANCASTER* were with the gunboat guard at the mouth of the Yazoo, and on the *MONARCH*'s return, January 5, 1863, Lieut. Tuthill and eight artillerymen of Lieut. Howell's force on the *LANCASTER*, were detached, and assigned to the *LIONESS*, which had now arrived from above.



CHAPTER V

February, 1862

Vary Again Above Vicksburg—Queen Rams a Transport and Runs the Batteries—First Cruise and Exploits of the Queen—Second Cruise and Loss of the Queen—Advent of the Indianola, and Rescue of Ellet and His Men—The Queen as a Rebel, with the Webb, Capture the Indianola—The "Dummy"—Causes—Consternation in Rebeldom—Indianola Blown Up—Reports, Dispatches and Press Comments on These Events.

While Vicksburg was left partially unguarded from below, for several months, and for a short time from the Yazoo, all possible advantage had been taken by the rebels to open up communication in both directions, and gather supplies and defences for the inevitable siege to come. One of the means thus secured, in the hall of naval activity, was a strong steamer, the *City of Vicksburg*. On return of the fleet to its old position, the facts about the newcomer at Vicksburg were quickly learned, and to the Admiral it proved a veritable thorn in the flesh, akin to the feeling of his predecessor at the presence of the "*Arkansas*." At this time, as all Farragut's vessels had withdrawn to the lower river, communication between Vicksburg and the rich supply district known as the Red River country, was constant, by means of the small boats brought out from the bayous and connecting tributaries. This quickly followed when the Federal fleet had gone below. As we have seen, the defenses of Vicksburg had enjoyed several months respite, and this time had been so well occupied, that it was declared by the rebel press that they were now impregnable.

His fleet at anchor as a navy of occupation above the rebel stronghold, the Admiral's mind evidently dwelt upon the possibilities the future might bring out of that inoffending transport lying at the Vicksburg wharf. He well knew that the fortifications on the river

front had, in the past few months been greatly extended and strengthened, and the hazard to vessels attempting to run these batteries was far greater now than when Farragut, at such severe cost, seven months before, had performed this feat. Admiral Porter had several formidable ironclads—one especially, the *Tuscomb*, then regarded as well nigh invulnerable, but in his planning to meet the mortifying situation, he turned to the ram fleet and its brave young commander, and here is the outcome of his planning:

Yazoo River, February 1, 1863.

Col, Chas. Rivers Ellet, Ram Queen of the West:—

Sir:— You will proceed with the Queen of the West to Vicksburg, and destroy the steamer Vicksburg, lying off that place, after which you will proceed down the river, as far as our batteries, below the canal, and report to me. In going down you will go along under low speed, having steerage way enough, and keeping close to the right hand shore going down. Before you start, it would be better to have a large bed of coal in, so that you will not have to put in fresh coal. The smoke might betray you. After you have destroyed the steamer, go down stream, and when clear of the city, show three vertical lights that our batteries may not fire on you. If you get disabled, drift down until abreast of our batteries, and the small army steamer will go to your assistance. Have every light in your ship put out before you leave for Vicksburg, except the three lights to be shown to our batteries, which must be kept covered up. See that no lights show from the stern as you pass the town, enabling them to rake you, and adopt every means of concealment. The best place to strike the steamer is 20 feet forward of her wheel. After disabling her there so that she will sink, fire through her boilers, and in among her machinery, as she goes down. It will not be part of your duty to save the lives of those on board. They must look out for themselves, and may think themselves lucky if they do not meet the same fate meted out to the Harriet Lane. Think of the fate of that vessel while performing your duty, and shout "Harriet Lane" into the ears of the rebels. If you can fire turpentine balls from your bow field-pieces into the light upper works it will make a fine finish to the sinking part. Further orders, for duty to be performed below, will be given you after your report.

Respectfully your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

Well did the Admiral know that he could count on the daring and venturesome spirit of the young officer in command of the rams to undertake this hazardous enterprise. True the boat to be rammed

was not a war vessel, endangering his fleet, or of great importance to the enemy as a transport, penned to the river front by the fleet above and the Federal batteries planted on the peninsula below, but something must be done to relieve the strain of the situation, and Ellet was willing and ready to dare and do anything commanded or permitted, that gave promise of successful achievement for the glory of the ram fleet. Immediately he set about preparations for the attempt. These preparations included the coaling and provisioning of the vessel, increasing her protection by a barricade of cotton bales, a change of location for her steering apparatus, and the selection of a volunteer crew, from the several vessels of his fleet. One instance of this volunteering is worthy of mention here. While at Milliken's Bend in December, second Master, J. D. Thompson, of the *Lancaster* had been on complaint of Captain Sutherland, commanding, ordered in arrest for disrespectful language, and charges were pending. When the preparations were being made (February 1) for the *QUEEN* to run the batteries, Thompson addressed a note to Col. Ellet, offering to go on her as one of the crew, which offer was promptly accepted. Whatever the fault of this brave officer, he expiated it in this noble act, and as we shall see, made the supreme sacrifice for his country, a few days later. It is to be regretted that no official list of these brave men, constituting the officers and crew in this perilous attempt, has been preserved, but a few are found mentioned in reports and diaries, and they are as follows: Col. C. R. Ellet, Captain Asgill Conner, Lieut. J. L. Tuthill, Masters J. D. Thompson, Cyrus Addison and Henry Duncan, Pilot, Scott Long. Engineers, Reuben Townsend, Edward Hooper, James Ellis, Sam. J. Weaver, and Edward Taylor. Carpenters, J. W. Lister, Thomas Carrico, George Andrews and James W. Foster, Steward G. W. Hill and Cook Abe Coss. Sergeant Campbell is mentioned in Ellet's report. Many names occurring in a subsequent list of the *QUEEN*'s men, no doubt belong also in the foregoing.

All arrangements were completed during the day and night following, and in the early morning of February 2, the *QUEEN* cast loose and boldly turned her prow down stream. The rebels were anticipating some attempt of the kind, and were on the lookout. There was an unexpected delay after the *QUEEN* had started, and this afforded time for the amplest preparation, in shottng and pointing every gun

in the river batteries, and also for the assembling of all the infantry supports to the water batteries, which were filled with sharpshooters. There likewise were gathered hundreds of spectators, including women and even children to witness the fray. The delay lasted till it was broad daylight, and the sun was shining brightly, when the QUEEN again started, under full steam, rounded the upper bend and passed into the "hell of fire," awaiting her. On she sped amidst the booming and roar, and crash of shot striking her, and shells exploding around her, apparently as heedless of them as if they were playful butterflies. When nearly opposite the boat she was to strike the QUEEN was brought around, and headed for it, but the power of the current, as soon as she turned to cross over, lessened her speed, and the effect of her blow, which being partly from a down stream direction, was glancing and insufficient in force to cause the boat's destruction. Now, for the first time, the two guns the QUEEN carried were used at close quarters, in the endeavor to set fire to the vessel she attacked. All this time the batteries were pouring forth their vomit of shot and shell, and smoke almost hid the devoted QUEEN as she backed off, and heading down stream, pursued her course to the appointed rendezvous, to all appearances uninjured. Here we shall let the gallant commander's story of the fiery trial through which the QUEEN and her heroic crew had passed, be told in his official report to the Admiral:

U. S. Steamer Ram Queen of the West.

Below Vicksburg, Miss., Feb. 2, 1863.

Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter, Com'dy Miss. Squadron:

Admiral: In compliance with your instructions I started on the Queen of the West at 4:30 o'clock this morning, to pass the batteries at Vicksburg and sink the rebel steamer lying before that city. I discovered immediately on starting, that the change of the wheel, from its former position, to the narrow space behind the Queen's bulwarks, did not permit the boat to be handled with sufficient accuracy. An hour or more was spent on re-arranging the apparatus, and when we finally rounded the point, the sun had risen, and any advantage which would have resulted from the darkness was lost to us. The rebels opened a heavy fire upon us, as we neared the city, but we were only struck three times before reaching the steamer. She was lying in nearly the same position that the Arkansas occupied when Gen. Ellet ran the Queen into her, on a former occasion. The same causes which prevented the destruction of the Arkansas then, saved the City of Vicksburg this morning. Her po-

sition was such that if we had run obliquely into her, as we came down, the bow of the *Queen* would inevitably have glanced. We were compelled to partially round to, in order to strike. The consequence was that at the very moment of collision the current, very strong and rapid at this point, caught the stern of my boat and acting on her low as a pivot, swung her round so rapidly that nearly all her momentum was lost. I had anticipated this result, and therefore caused the starboard bow gun to be shotted with three of the incendiary projectiles recommended in your orders. As we swung around Sergt. J. H. Campbell detailed for the purpose, fired this gun. A 64-pounder shell crashed through the barricade just before he reached the spot but he did not hesitate. The discharge took place at exactly the right moment, and set the rebel steamer in flames, which they subsequently succeeded in extinguishing. At this moment one of the enemy's shells set the cotton on fire near the starboard wheel, while the discharge of our own gun ignited that portion which was on the bow. The flames spread rapidly, and the dense smoke, rolling into the engine-room, suffocated the engineers. I saw that, if I attempted to run into the City of Vicksburg again, my boat would certainly be burned. I ordered her to be headed down stream, and turned every man to extinguishing the flames. After much exertion we finally put out the fire, by cutting the burning bales loose. The enemy, of course, were not idle. We were struck twelve times, but though the cabin was knocked to pieces, no material injury to the boat, or to any of those on her, was inflicted. About two regiments of rebel sharpshooters in rifle-pits kept up a continuous fire, but did no damage. The *Queen* was struck twice in the hull, but above the water line. One of our guns was dismounted and ruined. I can only speak in the highest terms of the conduct of every man on board. All behaved with cool, determined courage.

I remain very respectfully,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET,
Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

When the hazard of this unsupported undertaking is fully considered, and the risk of both the *QUEEN* and her crew to well nigh certain destruction, with no probable injury to the enemy beyond the possible sinking of an unarmed transport, the conclusion is irresistible that the officer responsible for it, deserved little commendation for his part in the affair. It was fortunate for him that the brave men that day sent upon such an ill-starred mission, escaped with scarce a scratch. Had the ram and her crew been lost, the Admiral would have been censured by all the world. Had this movement been part of concerted action, other vessels supporting, and ready after the passage of the batteries, to co-operate in raiding the country below, there would perhaps have been sufficient justification for the extraor-

dinary hazard. However, the gallant QUEEN survived the ordeal, and her valiant commander and crew were now ready for any service required of them, in the new field of action in which they found themselves.

The following from the Vicksburg correspondent of the *Mobile Advertiser*, dated February 3, gives a pen picture of this event, from the rebel side, and indicates their estimate of its importance:

"The passage of the Federal ram by the batteries, yesterday morning, although a mortifying sight, was yet a magnificent one, and was witnessed by hundreds of fair ladies and brave men, among whom I noticed several Mobilians, who had gathered upon the highest eminences about the city, and even upon the very verge of the river, in the delusive hope of seeing the ugly looking thing sink to the bottom of the Mississippi. Instead of creating a panic, it aroused the curiosity and patriotic ardor of the entire population, and a universal feeling of chagrin seemed to pervade the whole community at witnessing her escape.

"In passing by the steamer Vicksburg she attempted to destroy that boat by a butt, but struck a slanting blow, which only stayed in a few of her deck planks and forced her high into the mud. A turpentine ball was then thrown aboard of the Vicksburg with a view of firing her, but the attempted incendiarism also failed to do its work. Mechanics who were at work on the latter-named boat report that when the ram was within a short distance of them a ball from one of our guns struck and passed entirely through her. But for the short range of this gun it would probably have sunk the ram.

"This movement of the enemy has been expected here ever since the arrival of the army and fleet above, and no one doubted the success of the experiment. Of course the canal, through which the transports are to be taken, would be useless unless some of the gunboats were below to protect its entrance into the Mississippi."

From the same source, two days later came a further comment on the effect the probable operations of the Federal ram below would have upon Vicksburg and its supplies, rightly judging that this was the real object of the Admiral in sending her past the batteries:

"The worst that has befallen this place, and perhaps the entire Confederacy, since the arrival of the Yankee army on the peninsula

“across the river, is the interference with our communication with “Red River. From that stream we had, heretofore, access to vast “amounts of supplies, and a great portion of the Confederate army “was supplied from this source. So did also the people have the op- “portunity of supplying themselves with that most indispensable ar- “ticle, salt, and with sugar and molasses. Since communication is “interrupted the latter article has risen to \$60 per bbl. By the time “the merchants in Mobile pay exorbitant freights, and expenses of “going after and watching it included, it will cost a nice little pile to “sweeten up with molasses.

“The fleet is still increasing, and in the morning at the rising of “the sun a spectacle meets the eye which reminds one of some great “shipping mart, where the vessels from all countries in the world are “lying lazily at anchor.

“Since the passage of the ram a few days since, a great change has “been made in the management of our batteries, and another attempt “of this sort will, no doubt, meet with more disastrous results than “did the first one. It was one of those occurrences which are some- “times necessary to wake up the sleeping energy and watchfulness of “our men, without which a carelessness might have crept into our lines “that would have carried greater consequences with it.”

Admiral Porter made special report of this event, and, as if to forestall a possible criticism of the hazard to which he was subjecting a single vessel of his command, closes it with a rather dubious promise of affording support to the daring QUEEN. The following was his dispatch.

Off Vicksburg, February 3, 1863.

Hon. Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy:

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that on the 1st instant I ordered Col. Chas. R. Ellet in the ram Queen of the West, Capt. Sutherland, Com- mander, to run the batteries at Vicksburg and destroy the steamer City of Vicksburg lying before the city. She ran the batteries under a heavy fire of fifty guns and struck the steamer, leaving her on fire and in a sinking condi- tion. The fire was put out and the steam pumps still kept the steamer afloat. The Queen of the West is off down the river with orders to capture and de- stroy all vessels she meets with. This cuts off all the enemy's means of sup- plies for Port Hudson and Vicksburg, by the way of Red River, and cuts off

all communication up the Big Black. I will re-enforce the *Queen of the West* as soon as an opportunity offers.

Very respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER.

[NOTE.—The Admiral's mention of Captain Sutherland was erroneous. That officer being then on duty on the *MONARCH*.]

In a subsequent communication, dated February 8, the Admiral, referring to the effect by the *QUEEN'S* attack upon the rebel steamer in passing, says: "I am happy to inform you that the steamer *Vicksburg* was so badly damaged by the *QUEEN OF THE WEST* that she has to be kept afloat by large coal barges fastened to her sides. Her machinery has been taken out and she will likely be destroyed. The "*Vicksburg* was the largest and strongest steamer on the river, and I think they were preparing to use her against our transports—she being very fleet. Her guards and wheels were smashed in, and a large hole knocked in her side. So deserters report."

There was no delay in the *QUEEN'S* entering upon her career as a destroyer of commerce. A short stay at the landing below the cut off, to receive her instructions from the Admiral, and the lines were cast off, and the *QUEEN* and her gallant crew were away on their cruise, into the heart of rebeldom. They were gone three days, and then returned in safety. Col. Ellet's report contains sufficient details for the history of this eventful trip:

U. S. Steam Ram *Queen of the West*.

Below Vicksburg, Miss., Feb. 5, 1863.

Brig. Gen. Alfred W. Ellet, Com'dg Marine Brigade:

General: I have the honor to report to you that I left the landing below the cut off, about 1 p. m. on the 2nd instant, and proceeded down the river. At Warrenton, a few miles below, the enemy had two batteries of four pieces each, of which four are 20-pound rifle guns. They opened upon us as we passed, but only struck us twice, doing no injury. On reaching the Big Black River, I attempted to ascend it, but found it impossible from the narrowness of the stream. Passing it, we reached Natchez just at midnight. I landed at Vidalia, on the opposite shore, threw out some pickets and went into the village in the hope of picking up some rebel officers. There can be no telegraphic line between Vicksburg and this point, for not a word of our coming had reached the place, and the people scarcely knew who we were. One rebel, Col. (Z) York, was halted but made so rapid a retreat that he escaped the

shots fired after him. Leaving this point, I kept on down the river. We passed Ellis' Cliff at 3 a. m. There are no fortifications at that, or any other point between Warrenton and Fort Hudson. We had got about 15 miles below the mouth of Red River when we met a side-wheel steamer coming up. Her pilot blew the whistle for the Queen to take the starboard side, supposing her to be a southern boat. Receiving no answer, and not liking the Queen's looks, as she bore straight down upon him, he ran his boat ashore. As we neared her, numerous rebel officers sprang into the water and made their escape. She proved to be the H. W. Baker—had just discharged her cargo at Port Hudson and was returning for another. We captured on her 5 captains, 2 lieutenants and a number of civilians, among them seven or eight ladies. I had just placed a guard on the boat when another steamer was seen coming down the river. A shot across her bows brought her to; she proved to be the Moro, laden with 110,000 pounds of pork, nearly 500 hogs, and a large quantity of salt, destined for the rebel army at Fort Hudson. I placed Capt. Asgill Connor in command of the captured boats, and as the Queen's supply of coal was very limited, I thought it best to return. A short distance above our landing, I destroyed 25,000 pounds of meal, awaiting transportation to Port Hudson. On reaching Red River, I stopped at a plantation to put ashore the ladies, who did not wish to go any farther. I also released the civilians. While doing so, another steamboat, the Berwick Bay, came out of Red River, and was immediately seized. She was laden with supplies for the rebel forces at Port Hudson, consisting of 200 barrels of molasses, 10 hogsheads of sugar, and 30,000 pounds of flour. She had also on board 10 bales of cotton. I ascended Red River 15 miles, in the hope of getting some more boats, but found nothing. Night came on as we again started on our return. I found at once that the progress of the three prizes was so slow that our short supply of coal would not permit us to wait for them. I accordingly ordered them to be set on fire. We had not time to transfer their cargoes. We met with no interruption on our return, until we reached Warrenton. Before arriving at this point, I landed and sent my prisoners around by land, under a strong guard, to avoid exposing them to the enemy's fire. On passing Warrenton we found another battery had been erected there, and the three combined opened a very heavy fire upon us. They struck us several times, but did no damage worth mentioning.

CHAS. RIVERS ELLIOT.

The Admiral's report of Elliot's exploit contains several additional particulars and is given in full.

Miss, Squadron, Mouth of Yazoo, Feb. 5, 1863.

Hon. Gideon Welles, Secretary of Navy:

Sir: After the ram Queen of the West had reported progress before Vicksburg, I ordered her down the river to sink and destroy all vessels she

met with. Col. Ellet returned home this morning, passing the fort at Warrenton, in broad daylight, and was hit several times. He destroyed below three large steamers loaded with pork, sugar, molasses and army supplies. He captured 5 captains and 2 lieutenants. A number of rebel officers made their escape by jumping overboard. Col. Ellet came within two hours of catching Gen'l Dick Taylor with a transport load of troops. The *Queen of the West* went ten miles up Red River where there are many fine steamers that are supplying Port Hudson. They will likely not attempt to go out while the ram is about. She is now out of coal, and had to return on that account. I am going to supply her, either by drifting a barge around at night, or by sending across the land. Col. Ellet learns from the prisoners that Gen'l Banks is seven miles from Port Hudson. They had a severe engagement a few days ago. The rebels withdrew, and went back to the fort, and our troops went back to their camps. A drawn battle I presume. The ram took all the vessels by surprise. The people did not dream of anything of the kind. If we can not take just now the six miles of river in front of Vicksburg we can take anything that steams upon that portion of the Mississippi between Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

Very respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER.

The Confederate archives furnish interesting evidence of the surprise and consternation, created by the appearance and operations of the *QUEEN*, on this raid. In a dispatch in the nature of a report, Gen. Sibley, in command of the district embracing the lower Red river country, made to the commander at Vicksburg on the 4th, he said: "I have just received a dispatch from one of my officers near the mouth of Red river who reports that the gunboat which passed Vicksburg has appeared there, and had captured three of our boats—the *Moro*, *Baker* and the *Berwick Bay*. The gunboat is the *QUEEN OF THE WEST*. She is an ironclad, but is arranged on Magruder's plan—with cotton bales. Prisoners released from her state her armament is composed of 12 pounders. She placed prize crews on the boats captured, and has proceeded up Red river. I have ordered a company of cavalry and one section of artillery to that point, to attempt the recapture of the boats, which at last account were lying near the river banks, and but slimly guarded." . . .

The safe return of the *QUEEN* was heralded far and wide, and upon her officers and crew were bestowed high and well deserved encomiums,—the award sure to be given where success is the result of a venture. The Admiral and Gen. Sherman, whose command was en-

camped nearest the canal, were much interested, and ready to aid in getting the doughty QUEEN ready for another cruise, for which, preparation had at once begun. Sherman and some of his staff went across and visited the QUEEN. In replying to a note from the Admiral on the subject of transporting coal by teams across the peninsula for the bunkers of the QUEEN, the General wrote: "A barge could be carried at night and turned loose and let her [the QUEEN OF THE WEST] pick it up. This plan was suggested by the officer of the QUEEN OF THE WEST [Col. C. R. Ellet] when I was on board of her yesterday afternoon. Col. Ellet seems to be full of energy and resources. If he will devise a practical method of getting coal to this boat and needs assistance which I can give, tell him to call on me."

This suggestion was followed, and proved successful, and two days later the QUEEN was amply supplied with the needed fuel for her second trip. Ellet had felt the need of a more effective armament for his vessel, as she was likely to encounter land batteries, and repel shore attacks, rather than deal with fighting craft, and his conversation with Gen. Sherman seems to have impressed that officer with an idea which he at once proceeded to put into execution, as appears from the following:

HEADQUARTERS 15th A. C.

Camp Before Vicksburg, Feb. 6, 1863.

Special Orders.

The officer in charge of the two 30-pounder rifle guns now in position at the mouth of the canal, will deliver them with their ammunition and implements to the order of Col. Ellet, commanding the ram Queen of the West, now lying at the lower landing. The officer commanding the Infantry guard will assist, with all his men, in putting these guns and ammunition on board the Queen of the West in such manner as Col. Ellet may request.

By order of Major General Sherman,

J. H. HAMMOND,

A. A. G.

Some changes and additions were now made in both the crew and sharpshooters aboard the QUEEN, and all arrangements were completed, and the vessel ready for her second cruise. Little did the brave fellows, so willing and anxious to go on this perilous enterprise, know what was before them. The gallant QUEEN had seemed to bear a

charmed life, and no thought of disaster to her, entered the minds of officers or men, who had come to regard their vessel as invulnerable.

The two Parrotts were at once mounted on the decks of the QUEEN and the De Soto (a small ferry boat now to accompany the QUEEN) and with the following letter of instructions the ram set forth upon her mission:

U. S. Miss. Squadron, Feb. 8, 1863.

Col. Chas. Rivers Ellet, Com'dg Miss. Ram Fleet:

Colonel: When you have taken in your coal, you will proceed at night, after dark, with the De Soto and the coal-barge, down the river, showing no lights. When you get near Red River, wait until daylight, above the mouth; from there you will be able to see the smoke of any steamer over the trees, as she comes down Red River. When you capture them do not burn them until you have broken all the machinery. Then let go the anchors and let them burn, under your own eyes, at their anchors. There will be no danger then, of any part of them floating down to the enemy. There is one vessel (the Webb) that you must look out for. If you can get the first crack at her, you will sink her, and if she gets the first crack at you, she will sink you. My advice is, to put a few cotton bales over your bow, about fifteen feet abaft the stern, and if she strikes you there there will be no harm done. It is likely that an attempt will be made to board you. If there is, do not open any doors or ports, to board in return, but act on the defensive, giving the enemy steam and shells. Do not forget to wet your cotton before going into action. Do not lose sight of the De Soto, unless in chase and under circumstances when it will be perfectly safe. When your coal is all out of the barge, you can take the De Soto along-side. You can help each other along. Destroy her at once, when there is the least chance of her falling into the hands of the enemy. She is now, though a Government vessel, and should be brought back if possible. Destroy all small boats you meet with on the river, also wharf-boats and barges. If you have a chance, and have plenty of coal, take a look at Port Hudson, and give them a few rifle shots, but do not pass by. Communicate with the squadron below by signal if possible. The great object is to destroy all you can of the enemy's stores and provisions, and get your vessel back safe. Pass all batteries at night. If the canal is opened I will keep you supplied with coal. Keep your pilot house well supplied with hand grenades, in case the enemy should get on your upper decks. Do not show your colors along the river, unless necessary in action.

Yours respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER.

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

In addition to her former crew, somewhat augmented by volunteers from the other rams above, there were on board, at her departure,

three venturesome representatives of the press, from whose voluminous accounts of this expedition it is an easy matter to relate with sufficient detail, all that is important to preserve as the history of the "last cruise of the QUEEN," in the service of Uncle Sam.

One of these ["Mack"] at the time wrote and sent to his paper a list of the officers of the QUEEN as she was about to start, adding suggestively:

"I don't know when you will hear again from your ram-pant correspondent. There is a degree of uncertainty about all human things. The following are the officers of the QUEEN OF THE WEST: Colonel Charles R. Ellet, commanding ram fleet; Captain A. Connor, Carbondale, Ill.; Lieut., J. L. Tuthill, Carbondale, Ill.; First Master, J. D. Thompson, Peoria, Ill., commanding vessel; First Pilot—Scott Long, Indiana. Second Pilot—Thomas W. Garvey, Pittsburgh, Pa. Third Pilot—B. McKay, Madison, Ind. First Engineer—Reuben Townsend, New Albany, Ind. First Assistant Engineer—Edward Taylor, New Castle, Pa. Second—David E. Hooper, New Albany, Ind. Third—James Ellis, New Albany, Ind. Fourth—Sam'l Weaver, Mound City, Ill."

Dr. David S. Booth, who accompanied the QUEEN as surgeon probably went aboard after the correspondent's report was written, as Lister's diary mentions that Dr. Booth and Pilot McKay came aboard February 10, and gives a list of officers and crew, in which appear the following names, additional to the above: J. W. Lister, George Andrews and Thomas Carrico, carpenters; Cyrus Addison and Henry Duncan, masters; G. W. Hill and Abe Coss, crew. He also mentions the coming aboard of Pilot Garvey just before the start.

An incident of this period, of painful interest, as subsequent events proved, was the writing of a letter by Master Thompson to Gen. Ellet, requesting that should he (the writer) be killed, the money due him should be sent to his affianced—a lady in Illinois—a bequest afterward faithfully complied with.

It will be remembered that the rams were originally manned by details from Illinois regiments, now nearly a year absent from their commands. The War Department recognizing the permanence of the ram fleet service, and the injustice to the depleted regiments, now is-

sued the following order of permanent transfer, making the military force of the ram fleet a distinct part of the Marine Brigade.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Washington, D. C., February 11, 1863.

Special Order No. 69.

EXTRACT XXII. The detachments from the Fifty-ninth and Sixty-third Regiments Illinois Volunteers, and Company K, Eighteenth Illinois Volunteers, now serving with the Mississippi Ram Fleet, are hereby permanently detached from their respective commands, and transferred to the Mississippi Marine Brigade. The Governor of Illinois is authorized to recruit a new company for the Eighteenth Regiment.

By order of Secretary of War.

L. THOMAS,
Adjutant General.

The start of the QUEEN and De Soto was made just at evening, February 10. To the surprise of all, the Warrenton batteries were silent as they passed, and the down trip was uneventful. But from the hour of entering Red River until the return of Ellet and a portion of his men, in a little steamer captured during the trip, events of a most stirring and exciting character followed one another in quick succession—the chief of which was the loss of the QUEEN to the enemy. From the numerous accounts of this unfortunate cruise (in addition to the report of Col. Ellet himself) facts sufficiently full and accurate, are obtained, for the purpose of our history. First we give Ellet's report, which necessarily omitted many interesting details:

U. S. Steamer Era No. 5, Feb. 21, 1863.

Below Vicksburg, Miss.

Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter, Com'dy Miss. Squadron: -

Admiral:- I have the honor to report to you that I left the landing below Vicksburg, in obedience to your written instructions, on the night of the 10th instant, taking with me the De Soto and coal-barge, and proceeded down the river. We passed Warrenton without interruption, and reached Red River on the following evening. I destroyed, as you directed, the skiffs and flat boats, along either shore. I ascended Red River on the morning of the 12th as far as the mouth of the Atchafalaya. Leaving the De Soto and coal-barge in a secure position, I proceeded down this stream. Six miles from its mouth I met a train of 12 army wagons returning from Simsport. I landed and destroyed them. On reaching Simsport I found that two rebel steam boats had just left, taking with them the troops and artillery stationed at this point.

They had left on the bank 50 barrels of Government beef, which I broke up and rolled into the river. I pursued another train of wagons for some distance, but they retreated into the swamps and escaped. One of their wagons loaded with ammunition and stores, fell into our hands and was destroyed. On her return at night a party of overseers and other civilians fired into the Queen from behind a levee, and immediately fled under cover of darkness. First Master James D. Thompson, a gallant and efficient officer, was shot through the knee. Anchoring at the mouth of the Atchafalaya, I waited until morning and then returned to the spot from which we had been attacked. All the buildings on three large adjoining plantations were burned by my order. I started up Red River the same day and reached Black River by night. On the morning of the 14th instant, when about fifteen miles above the mouth of Black River, a steamboat came suddenly around a sharp bend in the river, and was captured before she could escape. She proved to be the Era No. 5 laden with 4,500 bushels of corn. She had on board two rebel lieutenants and fourteen privates. The latter I at once parolled and set ashore. Hearing of three very large boats lying with steam down, at Gordon's Landing, thirty miles above, I decided on making an effort to capture them, intending to return if I should find the battery at that point too strong, and ascend the Washita. I left the Era and coal-barge, in charge of a guard. We reached the bend, just below Gordon's Landing, before dusk. The dense smoke of several boats rapidly firing up could be seen over the tops of the trees, as we approached, I ordered the pilot to proceed very slowly and merely show the bow of the Queen around the point. From the sharp bend which the river makes at this place, there was no apparent difficulty in withdrawing out of range of the enemy's guns, whenever it might be desired. The rebels opened up on us, with four 32-pounders the moment we came in sight. Their guns were in a fine position and at the third shot I ordered Mr. Garvey, the pilot, to back the Queen out. Instead of doing so, he ran her aground on the right hand shore. The position at once became a very hot one. Sixty yards below we would have been in no danger; as it was, the enemy's shots struck us nearly every time. The chief engineer had hardly repeated to me that the escape pipe had been shot away, when an explosion below, and a rush of steam around the boat, told me that the steam pipe had been cut in two. Nothing further, of course, could be done. I gave orders to lower the yawl at the stern of the Queen to carry off Capt. Thompson, who lay wounded in my state room. Some persons had already taken the yawl, however, and it was gone. The other yawl was on the De Soto, a short distance below. Fortunately the cotton bales, with which the Queen was protected, afforded an avenue of escape, and the majority of the men and officers succeeded in reaching the De Soto. I ordered this boat to be brought up, as far as it was practicable, without being struck, and sent her yawl to the Queen. Lieut. (John L.) Tuthill and Third Master Duncan bravely volunteered for this purpose. I remained with the De Soto over an hour, picking up men on cotton bales,

Lieut. Tutuill barely succeeded in escaping from the Queen, the rebels boarding her in skiffs as he escaped. Mr. Duncan staid too long and was captured. The Queen could have easily been burned, but this could not have been done while Capt. Thompson was on board, and it was impossible to remove him. All the passages had been blocked up with cotton, the interior of the boat was densely dark, full of steam and strewn with shatt red furniture. The display of a light enabled the batteries to strike her with unerring certainty. To have brought the De Soto alongside would have insured her destruction, as the light from the latter's furnaces rendered her a conspicuous mark. A dense fog sprang up as we started down in the De Soto, and she lost her rudders by running into the bank. Drifting down fifteen miles I took possession of the Era, and scuttled and burned the De Soto and barge. Knowing that the rebels would lose no time in pursuing, I pushed on down through the fog, throwing off the corn to lighten her. We reached the Mississippi at dawn. Opposite Ellis' Cliffs, Mr. Garvey ran the Era, a boat drawing less than two feet of water, hard aground, actually permitting her wheels to make several revolutions after she had struck, and it was with the utmost difficulty she could be gotten off. The disloyal sentiments openly expressed by Mr. Garvey, a few hours previous to this occurrence, rendered it necessary for me to place him under arrest, and fixed upon me the unwilling conviction that the loss of the Queen was due to the deliberate treachery of her pilot. It is to be regretted that the unfortunate illness of Mr. Scott Long, who piloted the Queen past Vicksburg, rendered it necessary for me to intrust the Queen to the management of Mr. Garvey. The next morning, a short distance below Natchez, I met the Indianola. Capt. (George) Brown thought that he might be able to ascend Red River, and destroy the battery at Gordon's Landing, and I accompanied him down in the Era, leading the way. I had not gone three miles when a break in the dense fog disclosed a steamer rapidly moving up stream, about a mile ahead. I at once rounded to, and caused the whistle to be blown, to warn Capt. Brown of her presence. As soon as the rebel steamer, which was undoubtedly the Webb, perceived the Indianola, she turned and fled. The latter fired two shots at her, but without effect. I learned afterward that three other armed boats had been sent in pursuit of the Era, and had been turned back by the Webb, on her retreat. They all went up the Red River. On reaching this stream Capt. Brown decided not to ascend it, and I thought it best to return at once. Thinking we might be attacked on the way up, I seized 170 bales of cotton and protected the Era's machinery as far as practicable. At St. Joseph I landed and seized the mails, and learned from them that Col. (Wirt) Adams was waiting for us at Grand Gulf, with two pieces of artillery. Thirty-six shots were fired at the Era while passing this point, none of which took effect. On reaching Island No. 107, a body of riflemen opened a heavy fire upon the Era, from the Mississippi shore. Suspecting it to be a ruse to draw us to the other side of the river, I decided on keeping to the right of the island. The furnaces of the Era became so clogged at this

point that I found it necessary to stop and have them cleaned out, a delay of twenty minutes being caused by this. The *Era* had scarcely passed the island when a battery of three guns opened upon us from the Louisiana shore; 46 shots were fired, but they did no injury. At Warrenton the rebels opened fire upon the *Era* with two rifled 20-pounder guns. They fired 21 shots but did not succeed in striking her. Extraordinary as it may appear, there is every reason to believe that no one was killed on the *Queen*. It is probably attributable to the fact that those below got into the hold through the numerous hatches, and thus escaped the effects of the steam. Mr. Taylor, one of the engineers, is reported, by a deserter from the *Webb*, to be badly scalded. Twenty-four men were taken prisoners, ten of whom were civilians employed on the boat. Assistant Surgeon Booth was the only commissioned officer captured.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET,

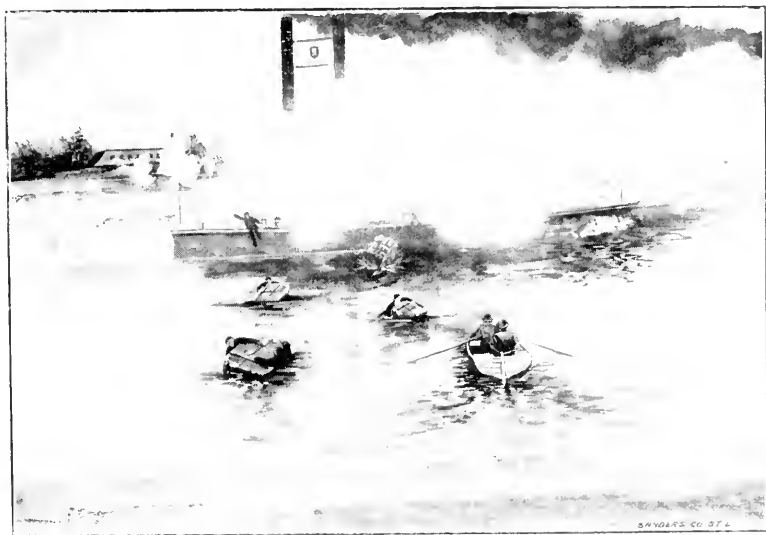
Commanding.

On the 12th, Admiral Porter had dispatched the *Indianola*, one of the staunchest of his vessels, and capable of use as a ram, to the support of the *QUEEN*. The instructions to her commander (Lieut. Brown) required co-operation with Ellet, their mission being the same, and also directed that when near Port Hudson, he send a communication, by floating a barrel by, in the night, to be picked up by the *Essex* (below the batteries) directing that vessel to run up by night and join the *QUEEN* and *Indianola*. The Admiral's plan was a good one, but events shaped themselves quite differently. The *Indianola* had cleared the Vicksburg batteries by night, in safety, and her arrival on the scene was most timely, for Ellet and his men.

The fuller account of this expedition is as follows: The ferry boat *De Soto* which accompanied the *QUEEN* towed a barge of coal, which had been floated down by night. Some barricades had been hastily constructed to protect her boilers, and the gun mounted and manned gave the little craft quite a warlike appearance. Alas, her career was to be both brief and inglorious. The two vessels made Natchez during the day following their departure, and anchored for the night (11th) at the mouth of Old river. The following day the *QUEEN* cruised in the Atchafalaya, surprising and capturing and destroying a supply train of wagons, loaded with beef, also one containing ammunition and officer's baggage. As she was returning, just at evening, and passing close along the shore, the *QUEEN* was fired

upon by concealed riflemen and Master J. D. Thompson, being in an exposed position on the upper deck, received a severe wound in the knee, very much as the Senior Ellet had been injured, in the fight of the QUEEN at Memphis. On the following morning, in retaliation for this act, the QUEEN returned to the spot and burned all houses, barns, sugar mills, and structures of every sort, from the mouth of the river to Simsport. At the latter place a rebel mail was captured, from which Ellet learned that some of Farragut's vessels had entered Berwick Bay and the lower Atchafalaya. On the afternoon of that day the QUEEN entered Red river, and was joined by the De Soto, both proceeding up and anchoring for the night at the mouth of Black river. Next morning the QUEEN and consort proceeded up the river. They had heard of the fortifications at Gordon's, also that some guns had been mounted at Harrisonburg, on the Big Black. They also learned that a rebel transport, the Louisville, had passed up the evening before, with a 32-lb. rifled gun on board for the rebel gunboat ram "Webb," being fitted out, up Red river. This decided Ellet to follow up the Red. Just then a steamer hove in sight, coming down. She turned immediately, but a shot from the QUEEN intended to be sent across her bows, but actually striking her stern, and creating havoc in her cook house, was promptly responded to by the waving of numerous white signals, and the QUEEN was soon alongside of her prize—the Era No. 5. She proved to be a fine steamer, of the Red River Packet Co., laden with corn for the quartermaster at Little Rock, to be unloaded and wagoned across the country from Camden. No resistance was offered, though there were found three rebel officers and nearly one hundred soldiers on board, belonging to different commands, but only as passengers. One passenger, a German Jew, giving the name of Elsasser had a large amount of Confederate money, and Col. Ellet believing him to be a rebel paymaster (though he stoutly denied it) held him, with the officers, two of whom were Lieuts. Daly and Doyle of Texas regiments, and paroled the soldiers, and set them ashore with the passengers and crew. One of the passengers, in citizen's clothes, it was afterward learned was an officer under General Hindman. The fleet of three vessels now proceeded up to the vicinity of Gordon's landing, where the Era was left, with a guard, and the other two moved cautiously forward—the QUEEN half a mile or more

in advance. On approaching the location, just at evening, as a short bend was being made, a dense smoke a short distance above revealed the presence of a retreating boat, and a couple of shots were sent in her direction from the QUEEN'S bow guns. The bend was a difficult one, and pilot Garvey, then at the wheel, not familiar with it, and presently the QUEEN was run hard and fast upon the bar, and every effort to get her off only increased the difficulty. Her position was in exact range of the guns of the fort not 400 yards distant, which



Loss of the Famous Ram, Queen of the West, Under the Guns of Fort DeRussy. Hopelessly Aground and Steam Pipes Cut. She is Abandoned with her Wounded, her Crew in part Escaping Down the River on Cotton Bales.

now opened upon her with deadly and destructive effect. In a few minutes she was disabled, her steam pipes cut by shot, and rapidly filling with steam, her men were compelled to seek safety by jumping overboard with whatever could be secured as buoys. A portion of the crew remained on board, sheltering themselves as best they could, from steam and shot. These, with the vessel, fell into the hands of the enemy. Ellet with most of his men, clinging to planks or cotton bales, floated down to the De Soto, half a mile below. In the panic

which followed the filling of the vessel with steam some of the men had taken the yawl at her stern and escaped down to the *De Soto*. Efforts at rescue were at once made by running the *De Soto* up, and Lieut. Tuthill went with the yawl to the rescue of the wounded, and others, still on the *QUEEN*. They reached her in a short time, passing many afloat on cotton bales, Col. Ellet, and McCullough (of the Cincinnati *Commercial*) among them, to find that those of the crew still there had resolved to remain with the surgeon, and take their chances as prisoners, as many of their comrades were more or less injured and Master Thompson, in a serious condition, from his wound of two days before. Surgeon Booth remained at his post to care for the wounded, and the yawl pulled away just as three boat loads of Confederate soldiers approached to board the *QUEEN*. The *De Soto* meantime was allowed to float slowly down stream picking up refugees as they came in hailing distance. The yawl followed, overtaking her some ten miles below. The *De Soto* had unshipped her rudder on the way and could only be steered by the alternate use of her wheels, and when the *Era* was reached, Col. Ellet resolved to use her for the escape, and destroy the *De Soto*, to keep her out of the enemy's hands. The transfer to the *Era* was soon effected, and the *De Soto* burned, her barge of coal, already in a sinking condition, being abandoned, as there was no time to coal the *Era*, if they were to escape the certain pursuit. The best possible speed was now made out of Red river, and to lighten her, all hands assisted in throwing out her load of corn. The night was dark, and a dense fog made navigation exceedingly difficult. Later, a heavy storm set in with sharp lightning and occasional loud thunder. Added to other difficulties of the fugitive crew, the fuel on the *Era* gave out, and only by using some corn, and other combustibles to help make steam, was she able to keep going, and finally at about 10 a. m. (February 13) she reached the Mississippi and turned up stream. Progress was now still more difficult, owing to the strong current, and the amount of driftwood, logs, etc., coming down, which caught in the wheels and broke many of the buckets. The storm still continued, and when wholly out of fuel, they landed at Union Point, and took on several cords of water soaked wood, with which scarce steam enough could be made to stem the current. Finally they reached Ellis' Cliffs, (where later, rebel batteries

were planted to attack passing steamers) and in crossing the point opposite, the *Era*, though drawing scarcely two feet of water, was run hard and fast aground. In this position the boat was held full four hours, within a few yards of shore. Fortunately no rebel force was near. The capture of all on board would have been easy, as most of the crew were unarmed.

The carpenter and assistants finally rigged a spar, procured from the woods near by, and sparred off the boat, and she proceeded on her way. Ellet had been suspicious of the loyalty of Pilot Garvey (who was known as a "sympathizer" with the South, though not a rebel) and this last "accident" was too much for his patience, and he ordered the pilot under arrest. At an early hour next morning a vessel was sighted coming down stream, which proved to be one of Admiral Porter's newest gunboats, the *Indianola*, Lieut. Commander Brown, which had two nights before, run the batteries of Vicksburg and was making her way down to join the *QUEEN*. The unexpected appearance of so staunch a craft as the ironclad *Indianola* was a most welcome sight to the fugitives, who took heart, and fresh courage, when furnished needed supplies of food, clothing and fuel, by the gunboat. Commander Brown regaled Col. Ellet and the two Bohemians who had staid with him through this perilous adventure, by taking them to his own cabin and giving them of his own good cheer. By noon it was decided by Ellet to return to Red river, with the *Era*, in company with the gunboat, and resume the offensive under her protection. Scarcely had the return trip begun when a vessel was descried in the distance coming up stream. The *Era* pushed ahead to reconnoitre, and her shrill whistle soon announced to the *Indianola* that the stranger was an enemy, and on that vessel immediate preparation for action was made. The rebel steamer had now halted, in the eddy, near Ellis' Cliffs, apparently waiting to learn what sort of a craft the formidable looking stranger was, and at that moment one of the bow guns, of the *Indianola*, and then the other, were fired at her, and apparently fully satisfied on that point, without further delay or inquiry, she turned, and was soon speeding down stream. It was the rebel ram "Webb"—a vessel of great strength and speed—and a ram fighter of no mean proportions, as the *Indianola* was to learn at no distant day. But there were two or three other vessels following the

"Webb" in the chase, which, being only transports with soldiers on board, were no match for a gunboat of the *Indianola's* fighting qualities. These were to be warned of their danger, and got out of harm's way, and the "Webb" lost no time in getting both herself and her consorts back into Red river. The boats here referred to, as afterward learned, were the steamers Grand Duke, Grand Era, and Doubloon. [Louis D'Or.]

A heavy fog now coming on compelled both the Federal vessels to anchor, and it was late in the afternoon of next day (February 17) before they could proceed down, but they reached the mouth of Old river toward night, anchoring opposite the great Ackley plantation. Here they learned that three boats had accompanied the "Webb." The expedition being under Col. Lovell; that it would make a stand at Gordon's where the guns would assist; also that the "Queen," not much injured, had been hauled off the bar and would be ready for service in time to help.

At noon on the following day the Era started for Vicksburg, stopping at the Jenkins plantation, five miles above, to take on a quantity of cotton bales, to be used as a protection for the boilers and machinery of the boat. On the morning following, the Era had reached St. Joseph, La., and Ellet sent ashore, and seized the mail, and from it learned that, since he had gone down the river, the enemy had placed a battery at Grand Gulf, to dispute his return. On arriving opposite, sure enough, the newly planted battery opened upon the defenceless Era with two six-pound guns, firing steadily at her, as she passed. But only one, of over thirty shells fired at her, struck her, and a cotton bale received that, and it glanced off harmlessly. At New Carthage, twenty miles nearer Vicksburg, an island in mid-stream allowed of passage on either side, and as the Era reached the foot of the island, a shower of minie balls from shore, rained upon the cabin and pilot house, but did no serious damage, and the boat was soon beyond their range. A party of riflemen followed along shore, and continued the attack for some distance. When nearing the upper end of the island the fires gave out, compelling the boat to lay to, cool down, and clean boilers, before proceeding. This occupied an hour or more, when she again steamed up, and just as she passed the head of the island, the battery of three twelve pound guns at New Car-

thage opened upon her at a furious rate. Shells passed over her, before, behind and short—but not one, of probably fifty, fired at the devoted vessel, struck her. A camp of the enemy was plainly seen, located on the Perkins plantation, near by, which furnished the support for the battery. One more ordeal awaited the *Era*, before she could reach her haven of safety. Warrenton was soon reached, and soon her batteries awoke the echoes, and shot and shell, like hail, again began to fall about her. Night was fortunately just coming on, and in the deepening twilight the *Era* glided slowly on her course, and out of range—unharmcd. Half an hour later she was safe at the old mooring, from which the *QUEEN* had started on her final cruise, and her survivors were receiving the greetings of comrades of army and navy, on their fortunate escape.

But the story of the capture of the *QUEEN*, and some of those who escaped from her, remains to be told. It comes from many sources, including diaries, and statements of those captured, in connection with their exchange. As the boarding party in yawls drew near the *QUEEN* and hailed her with a demand for her surrender, Mr. Anderson, the N. Y. *Herald* reporter, opened the parley with the rebel officer, who inquired for the senior officer on the boat. Learning that Surgeon Booth was the only commissioned officer on the *QUEEN*, he demanded a formal surrender by him, and received the same. Surgeon Booth, in his account of the affair, relates that this demand was made by a Captain Hutton, who on receiving the surrender, at once proceeded to station guards at various points on the decks, and then to take an inventory of everything movable on the boat. He also states that Capt. Kelso, commanding the *Post*, came aboard, early in the morning, and that shortly after, the "*Webb*," came alongside, and that as soon as her officers had taken a look at the *QUEEN*, they steamed off down the river. The wounded were removed and cared for, and the others held as prisoners. No authentic list of those falling into the hands of the enemy, has been found, but the correspondence of one of the reporters escaping on the *Era*, mentions those missing, and what was known, or currently reported, of each, as follows: Dr. D. S. Booth, Surgeon; Lt. Geo. W. Bailey, Adjutant; Master J. D. Thompson (wounded); Cyrus Addison, Second Master; Henry Duncan, Third Master; David Taylor, Engineer

(scalded): George Andrews and James Foster ship-carpenters; L. C. Jarboe, Thomas Williams, David McCullom, Charles Launer, Carroll Smith, Ed. Hazelton, Charles Falconer, John A. Bates, Norton F. Rice, Wm. Brown and Geo. W. Hill, soldiers, and Mr. Anderson, the Herald reporter, and about thirty negroes—all missing from the ranks of the rescued—and it was believed that most, if not all, were taken prisoners on the QUEEN, or in attempting to escape from her. The same account states that George Davis, who jumped overboard from the De Soto, was drowned.

During that day the QUEEN was taken in tow, and sent up to Alexandria, with the wounded and prisoners still on board. Next morning, Master Thompson, Engineer Taylor and the rest of the injured, were removed to hospital quarters, in the city. Mr. Anderson was put in jail, and the remainder of the crew taken aboard the steamer Grand Duke, used by Gen. Dick Taylor as a headquarters boat. Master J. D. Thompson, shortly after, died of his wounds; Engineer Taylor slowly recovered. In a few days Dr. Booth and the other prisoners were transferred to a prison ship, the General Quitman, already filled with prisoners, including portions of two regiments of U. S. regulars (the 6th and 8th, surrendered by Twiggs) who would not enter the Confederate service, and for whom exchange negotiations had been in progress for some time. This was fortunate for the "Marines" who fell into rebel hands at this time, for they were included in the plans for immediate exchange, and a few days later the Quitman was started for Port Hudson. On the way out they were joined by the Iberville, loaded also with rebel prisoners, and having the U. S. and Confederate exchange officials on board, and after a short delay the Union prisoners were passed through the lines. Dr. Booth states that there were between forty and fifty of the crew and soldiers of the QUEEN, among the prisoners; also that some were paroled, and not exchanged. Several of the men who were escaping were taken at other points below, and were not included in this exchange, but were sent to distant places, and finally to eastern prisons, so that it was several months before they reached the fleet again.

In the capture of the QUEEN the rebels thought they had a rare prize, and imagined that her marvelous success in the past was

to be duplicated in their behalf, as soon as she could be repaired and got in fighting trim. All haste was therefore made, in accomplishing this work, and it was not long till she was manned, and ready for service, as a rebel ram, her consort being the "Webb."

To one officer at least, news from Red river was highly interesting—Lt. Commander Brown, of the *Indianola*. His position was unsafe, but in the hope of support arriving from Porter he hesitated and decided—too late—to return. The start was made February 21, and stopping but once to take on some cotton bales for protection, he pushed up as fast as possible, with his coal barges alongside, reaching Grand Gulf on the 24th, and intending to pass its batteries, and those at Warrenton, during the night. But the Fates—the "Webb" and the "Queen"—were against him. At 9:30, the night being very dark, he sighted four boats coming up in pursuit, and immediately cleared for action, and turned down, to meet them. They proved to be the rams "Queen" and "Webb," and two cotton-clad steamers, filled with men, and carrying field artillery. The "Queen" led the attack, and her first stroke cut the coal barge in two, compelling its being cast loose to sink, but not injuring the *Indianola*. Then came a dash from the "Webb"—the vessels meeting nearly bows on, with a tremendous crash, but neither was seriously injured by the shock. The fight was now at close quarters, the cotton-clads keeping near, and plying their artillery and small arms, while the rams struck the *Indianola*, repeatedly, their later blows being aimed at her wheels and after quarters, and at the sixth and seventh they cut into her hull, and she began to fill and settle by the stern. The *Indianola's* guns seemed to deliver an ineffective fire, and the enemy, persevering in the attack, Commander Brown was at length compelled to strike his colors. In this fight, which so signally showed the superior destructiveness of the ram, as a war engine, the "Queen," while leading the attack did not sustain her Federal record—probably from the inexperience of her volunteer officers and crew. The "Webb" was credited with rendering the most destructive blows, particularly the last two, and Major Brent, who commanded her, was, by the rebels, accorded the honors of the capture.

The loss of the *Indianola*, following that of the QUEEN, put a new face upon affairs in the Mid-Mississippi, and led the rebels to

extravagant joy, and the Federals to corresponding chagrin and depression.

Some of the current comments upon these events, and the new situation, official and otherwise, will prove interesting to readers of this history. We use only such as relates to rams.

First we quote from Capt. Kelso's report of the capture of the QUEEN, at Fort Taylor: "Two Federal gunboats made their appearance in front of this position at 5 p. m. last evening.

"I had previously assigned every officer to his post; fire was therefore instantly opened on the enemy. After a brief cannonade the leading gunboat, the Queen of the West, struck her colors. I immediately ordered Capt. T. H. Hutton of the Crescent Artillery and Second Junior Lieut. Delahanty to go on board and demand the unconditional surrender of the boat, officers and crew. These officers report that but thirteen officers and crew were found on board, the others having escaped under cover of the night. The visible results of the capture consist in one thirty-two pounder rifled Parrott gun, one twenty-four pounder rifled Parrott gun, three twelve pounder Porfield Brass pieces, one twelve pounder Porfield Brass piece slightly damaged (I use the expression of the senior commanding officer) a tremendous supply of ordnance stores, a large supply of quinine, one fine case amputating instruments, one equally fine dental instrument, and other very superior cases of surgical instruments, clothing, bacon, flour, beef, hard bread, and other stores in proportion."

In the concluding portion of his report the Major says: "To satisfy you of the precision and accuracy of the fire, thirteen out of thirty-one shots from our batteries took effect on the enemy's boat," and he adds that a large warehouse near by was set on fire to light up the scene and give their gunners the "range and position of the enemy."

From recently published archives of the rebellion we learn that Pemberton had sent Col. W. S. Lovell of his staff to oversee, and hasten the conversion of the "Webb" and "Grand Duke," and other boats collected at Trinity, La., and that, by negro impressment and other extra efforts, redoubled in response to the expected hurry call, caused by the QUEEN's operations on her first cruise in Red river, he was able when the next alarm was sounded, from Fort Taylor, to take a de-

tachment of one hundred men aboard at Alexandria and hasten to the scene. His report says: "I found, on my arrival at Fort Taylor, that the QUEEN OF THE WEST had surrendered about 8 o'clock, having had one of her steam pipes cut; that the commanding officer and a number of the crew had escaped on the steamer, Era No. 5, and arrived in the Mississippi river about 9 o'clock in the evening. The fog at that time was so dense that we could make but little or no progress; finally it became so thick that we had to tie up. The pilots did everything in their power to make progress. We made only a few miles from 9 o'clock in the evening till 9 o'clock in the morning when we started again. Had to work along very slowly as the fog was so thick. On my way down the Red river I captured nine men belonging to the QUEEN OF THE WEST, one her second mate. He informed me that Col. Ellet expected a powerful ironclad to meet him at the mouth of Red river, and that it was time for her to be along, at the same time advising me to keep a bright lookout for her. . . ."

His report relates in detail the pursuit of Ellet's party, and the unexpected encounter with the gunboat,—of their seeing three sets of chimney tops over the fog—of their hasty retreat, taking their consorts, the Louis D'Or and Grand Duke, back to Red river in safety.

COMMENT, REPORTS AND DISPATCHES, ON THE CAPTURE OF QUEEN AND INDIANOLA.

From Maj. Gen. Dick Taylor, at Alexandria, La., to Adj. Gen. Cooper, at Richmond, February 15:—

The ram Queen of the West was captured at the fortifications below this point on the 14th, with all her armament and supplies. Most of the crew and commanding officers escaped on another boat. The De Soto, a small boat, filled up with cotton, and the consort of the ram, was sunk in the same engagement.

From G. W. Koontz, Confederate General Agent at Vicksburg, to Gen. Pemberton at Vicksburg, February 17:—

The Queen of the West and De Soto passed up Red River on Friday evening, and on their way captured Era No. 5. The Queen attacked our batteries at Fort Taylor, but was very soon disabled by our guns, and got aground, when Col. C. R. Ellet and many of the men abandoned her, floating off on cotton bales, and she is now supposed to be in our possession.

Before the Queen went up Red River she went down the Atchafalaya, near Simsport, and destroyed five or six plantations. After Col. Ellet and some of the men abandoned the Queen of the West they went on board the Era No. 5, which lay some five miles below the batteries, and came out of Red River, and yesterday morning joined the Indianola, ten miles below here. This information I gained from a white boy who was a prisoner on board. During the engagement the De Soto was destroyed, in sight of our batteries, by the enemy. The boy was brought up on the Era. I consider the information reliable.

From Gen. Dick Taylor, at Alexandria, to Gen. Pemberton, Vicksburg, February 20:—

The Federal ram, Queen of the West, was scarcely injured in the engagement with my battery on Red River—struck thirteen times; only one shot affected her, by cutting a steam pipe. She left here last night to attack the Federal boat now lying at or near the mouth of the Red River. One of my staff is in command, with orders to attack at all hazards. I confidently expect to hear of the capture or destruction of the enemy's boat [Indianola]. The Queen of the West will then proceed to Vicksburg to attempt to destroy the enemy's battery, if it has not already been removed. * *

Gen. Grant, before (above) Vicksburg, to Gen. Sherman, February 21:

The enemy having captured one of our rams [Queen] with all her armament, and having several other armed vessels below here, makes it necessary for our security to have a battery of Parrot guns below Vicksburg. If practicable I would like to have it placed below Warrenton.

Major Brent to Gen. Pemberton, February 25:

Last night about 10 p. m. fell in with the U. S. ironclad gun-boat Indianola, and after the rams Queen of the West and Webb, under Major Brent, had engaged her for an hour, I went alongside, when the commander, Lieut. Commander Brown, surrendered to me. As all credit is due to Major Brent, I turned over to him, in a sinking condition, the prize, which we hope to save. Nobody but five hurt.

Gen. Grant to Gen. Helleck, February 25:—

The Queen of the West is now at Warrenton with rebel flag flying. Firing heard last night from 4 p. m. to 1 this a. m. * * * Supposed to have been between the Queen and Indianola. Apprehension * * for the Indianola's safety. * * *

Gen. Dick Taylor to Adj't. Gen. Cooper at Richmond, February 25:

I have the honor to report, after a severe and hot engagement, the capture of the Federal ironclad steamer *Indianola*, Lieut. Com. Brown, U. S. N., together with all her officers and crew, by the C. S. steamers, *Queen of the West* and *Webb*, forming an expedition, sent out by me for that purpose under the command of Maj. J. L. Brent. The prize is a good deal damaged.

Gen. Sherman (15th A. C.) to Gen. Steele (1st Div.), February 26:

The ram *Queen of the West* having disappeared down the river may be construed as timidity on the one hand, or as evidence of having the river below free and unobstructed to the enemy. It looks to me ominous of the fate of the *Indianola*, and if she be destroyed or captured, we must expect, of course, the enemy at any time, making his appearance in boats from that direction. I will leave the four 20-pound guns there; one to cover the steamboat *New Era* [Era No. 5] two to offer some obstacle to the passage of boats above Warrenton. * * * I sent Col. Woods, last night, some signal rockets, with Gen. Grant's orders to fire one in case the ram [Queen or Webb] was seen ascending the stream, and two if descending.* * *

Gen. Grant to Gen. Halleck, Washington, February 27:

News just received that the *Queen of the West* and *Webb* attacked the *Indianola*, about thirty-five miles below Vicksburg, the night of the 24th, and after an engagement of about 10 minutes, captured her, with most of her crew.

Gen. Sherman to Col. Woods, Commanding Detachment Near Bigg's House, February 27:

I have received your several communications and have conferred with Admiral Porter and Gen. Grant. The *Indianola* is lost, and there is no assurance that she is sunk, or disabled beyond probability of repairs. We know the enemy has two rams in good order, and may have a number of transports. This renders vigilance on your part necessary. * * * The enemy has recovered the river below, and the *Era* is useless to us. * * * The Admiral has sent for several rams, one of which the *Monarch* has arrived, and he feels no uneasiness about the fleet above Vicksburg. * * * The enemy may attempt a night move to capture the *Era* and battery. [Orders destruction of Era No. 5, if necessary, to prevent her falling into rebel hands] * * *

Admiral Porter to Secretary Wells, February 27:

I regret to inform you that the *Indianola* has also fallen into the hands of the enemy. The rams *Webb* and *Queen of the West* attacked her twenty-five miles from here, and rammed her until she surrendered all of which can be

traced to non-compliance with my instructions. I do not know the particulars. If she has not sunk she may be used against the lower fleet [Gulf Squadron]. It would be well to caution them. * * * It appears that Lieut. Commander Brown laid at the mouth of the Red River three days (just about time to allow the Queen of the West and Webb to repair damages) and then, being apprehensive of attack, or reading over my instructions, and finding out that he was sent down only to protect the Queen of the West, and was ordered to attempt nothing when he was not certain of success, he started up the Mississippi River, with the two coal barges in tow, giving the enemy all that advantage. I had cautioned Lieut. Commander Brown so much before he started, about the management of his ship, and told him particularly to use his butting powers, which would have defeated both his antagonists, but he was caught with the two barges alongside, and his vessel must have been unmanageable. * * * I certainly had a right to expect that two vessels, carrying twelve guns, that had passed all the batteries at Vicksburg, Warrenton, Carthage and other places on the river, could manage between them to take one old steamer [previously mentioned as so weak, according to a deserter, that they had to take the iron off her bows, and her planking too old to calk] or else have the wisdom and patriotism to destroy their vessels, even if they had to go with them. * * * In conclusion, had the Indianola thrown off her coal barges and run up stream, with the speed she is reported to have, she could have disabled both the rams with her two 11-inch guns, in iron casemate, before either of them could get alongside of her. * * *.

Gen. N. P. Banks to Gen. Halleck, February 28:—

The capture of the Queen of the West, and the more recently reported capture of the De Soto [Indianola meant] has led Admiral Farragut to the conclusion that some vigorous movement upon his part was necessary, to co-operate with the gun-boats above, in endeavoring to cut off the enemy's communication with the Red River country, and to destroy his gun-boats in those waters. * * *

Gen. Pemberton to Gen. Dick Taylor, March 2:—

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your brilliant success in capturing first the Queen of the West, and afterward in sinking the Indianola. This last boat having been abandoned by your boats, and apprehensive that she might fall into the hands of the enemy, was blown up by order of Maj. Gen. Stevenson, in direct command of the troops at Vicksburg.

Gen. Halleck to Gen. Banks, (reply) dated March 5:—

In regard to the Mississippi I have very serious apprehensions. The results of the capture of the Queen of the West and Indianola can [however] do no great harm to Gen. Grant and Admiral Porter, but may to you and Admiral Farragut. * * *

At this critical juncture, so full of high hopes and pleasing anticipations on the Confederate side, and rueful anticipations of further probable disaster and loss on the Federal side, while the great movement upon Vicksburg by land was still in abeyance, occurred the striking and almost farcical incident—heralded the world over in consequence of the important results which came of it—a seamen's prank. This was the construction of a dummy Monitor, out of an old empty barge, with imitation smoke stacks, wheel houses, pilot house, etc., by the men of Porter's fleet above Vicksburg. When the formidable "monster" was turned loose, on the night of February 25, it floated noiselessly down, until sighted by the watchful sentinels. Instantly they gave an alarm that brought the gunners to the river batteries on double quick, and as soon as the vicious looking craft got in range gun after gun opened on her. In the darkness but few shot took effect, and such as did simply passed through the shell, without apparent injury. To intensify the excitement which the strange invulnerable craft caused, she did not deign even a shot in reply to all their cannonading. Not a suspicion seems to have entered the minds of officers or men of the garrison, as to the true character of the ugly looking craft, making its way down in the darkness and smoke, apparently so formidable and terrible as to move unharmed by the rain of shot and shell poured upon it. As the dummy passed out of range of the Vicksburg batteries, there was a hurried consultation and the conclusion reached that a great ironclad had gone to the rescue of the *Indianola*, and forthwith Gen. Stevenson in command of the batteries and forces, sent a courier with orders to the officers and men engaged in trying to raise and repair her, apprising them of the coming of an invincible enemy, and directing the immediate destruction of the vessel, and its armament. To add to the consternation caused by the oncoming dummy, the *Queen* which had just then reached Warrenton, was apprised of her supposed danger, and turning back, she spread the dread news as she sped for her Red river retreat. Those in charge of the *Indianola* at once began spiking and bursting guns, and throwing others overboard. But this proving too slow, she was fired, and blown up—a total wreck,—as the "Arkansas" had been a few months before.

The ludicrous side of this affair was well aired in the southern press of the time, greatly to the mortification of the commander at Vicksburg, whose discovery of the mistake made (when the dummy was shattered by the Warrenton batteries) was too late for his countermanding order to reach the spot in time to save the prize from destruction. One or two extracts here, will serve to illustrate the

CONFEDERATE DISGUST AT BEING FOOLED BY THE DUMMY.

From the Vicksburg Whig, March 5:—

"We stated a day or two since that we would not then enlighten our readers in regard to a matter that was puzzling them very much. We allude to the loss of the *Indianola*, recently captured from the enemy. The Yankee barge, sent down the river last week, was reported to be an ironclad gun-boat. The authorities (thinking that this monster would retake the *Indianola*), immediately issued an order to blow her up. The order was sent down by courier to the officer in charge of the boat. A few hours afterwards another order was sent down countermanding the first (it being ascertained that the monster was only a coal barge) but before it reached the *Indianola* she had been blown to atoms. Not even a gun was saved. Who is to blame for this piece of folly this precipitancy? It would really seem we had no use for gun-boats on the Mississippi, as a coal barge is magnified into a monster, and our authorities immediately order a boat that would be worth a small army to be blown up."

From the Richmond Examiner, March 7:—

"The telegraph brings us tidings of something which is tremblingly described as a 'turreted monster.' Gunboats are deemed not more dangerous than dugouts, but when the case is altered to an interview with a 'turreted monster' then the brave defenders of the Father of Waters can do nothing better than make two-forty toward the mountains. The reported fate of the *Indianola* is even more disgraceful than farcical. Here was perhaps the finest ironclad in Western waters, captured after a heroic struggle, rapidly repaired, and destined to join the *Queen of the West* in a series of victories. Next we hear that she was of necessity blown up in true *Merrimac* Mallory style, and why? Laugh and hold your sides lest you die of a surfeit of derision, oh Yankeedom! Blown up because, forsooth, a flat boat or mud scow, with a small house taken from the back garden of a plantation, put on top of it, is floated down the river, before the frightened eyes of the Partisan Rangers."

From a Vicksburg dispatch to same paper, of March 7:

"The Queen of the West left [Warrenton] in such a hurry as to forget part of her crew, who were left on shore. Well done for the Queen of the West and her brave officers. A good joke on the Partisan Rangers. 'An excellent joke, adds the editor, 'entitling every man connected with that affair to be branded (if there is any truth in the dispatch) with the capital letters T. M., and to be enrolled in a detached company, to be known as the Turren Monsters henceforth and forever.'"

When the situation at that time on the Mississippi is carefully considered by the thoughtful reader—the hazardous operations of the QUEEN, without support and her loss, and then the equally hazardous venture of the *Indianola*, entirely insufficient in defense against the rams known to be in Red river, it is not to be wondered at that the officers and men of the Vicksburg batteries were looking for some formidable craft to move down to the rescue. Such had been the hope and expectation of the doomed crews of the QUEEN and the *Indianola*, but alas, they looked in vain. The fortunate result of the dummy incident, more a prank of the seamen than anything else, served to turn aside adverse comment upon the needless loss of these two vessels through their isolation, and exposure, singly, to the attack of rebel rams.

On March 3rd, Secretary Wells sent Farragut the news of these disasters, and warned him to be on his guard against a possible attack from these Red river rams.





CHAPTER VI

February-March, 1863

The Rebel Queen Seave Causes Scuttling of Ellet's Prize, Era, by Army Orders.

Porter's Hurry Order to Ellet for the Rams at Greenville. The Seave Reversed by Porter's Dummy. Lioness and Fulton with the Yazoo Pass Expedition. Arrival of the Marine Brigade. Rams Switzerland and Lancaster Run the Batteries. Latter Sunk and Lost. Graphic Description of Seave. Reports and Official Comment. Death of Lieut. Roberts.

On February 23rd, Col. Ellet had left the Era No. 5 at her landing, near the batteries, in command of Capt. Connor, and crossed the peninsula in front of Vicksburg reporting in person to the Admiral. The result of this interview was a detailed instruction to him to join his rams at Greenville, where he would find at least the Monarch and SWITZERLAND, co-operating in an army movement in that vicinity, and taking the latter, proceed to prepare her, by placing cotton bales on her decks to protect her machinery, for running the Vicksburg batteries. Ellet, unaware of the disaster that just then befel the *Indianola*, proceeded up to where the boats above named were stationed, and had but just set about his task, when he received the following urgent order, by dispatch boat, from the Admiral:

Above Vicksburg, Feb. 25, 1863.

Col. C. R. Ellet, Commander Ram Fleet:

Sir: Return here without a moment's delay. The Queen is up at Warren-ton. Heavy firing heard last night below here, and the presumption is that the *Indianola* is sunk, or captured. Hurry down—wait for nothing. We have nothing to meet the ram. Bring the Monarch also, if she is within hail, but do not wait for anything.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,
Acting Rear Admiral.

This unexpected message arrived on the morning of the 27th, and Ellet immediately started with the *SWITZERLAND*, ordering the *MOXARCH* to follow with all speed. The *MOXARCH* had been for a month previous doing patrol duty in that vicinity, and Gen. Burbridge, in command of some land forces sent to operate against the enemy during the same period, in his report on returning to Young's Point (February 27) makes this complimentary reference to Capt. Sutherland and his boat: "To Capt. Sutherland, of the steam ram *MOXARCH*, I am indebted for many acts of courtesy in his official capacity. His ram was with my transports from the time we reached Greenville until our return, and I was by that means able to leave the boats with no guard, and take all the well men with me in whatever expedition I needed them. . . ." But, certain rumors were brought to Col. Ellet's ears, of Sutherland's frequent communications with the enemy under flag of truce and otherwise, and of the coming and going to the vessel of the rebel wife he had recently married at Skipwith's, and on their arrival at the Admiral's fleet Ellet issued an order relieving him from duty on the *MOXARCH*, and directing him to report at once to Gen. A. W. Ellet, at St. Louis.

On reporting his arrival to the Admiral, Col. Ellet learned of the affair of the "dummy," which had meantime occurred, and that the "Queen" had retired—and the "Federal scare" was for the present over. Next morning Capt. Connor came on board the *SWITZERLAND* in high dudgeon at what had transpired since he was left with the *Era*, five days before. Colonel Ellet's report to General Alfred W. Ellet (who was then embarking his Marine Brigade at St. Louis) conveys the information which had elicited the Captain's ire, and incidentally shows that his superior shared in his feeling:

United States Ram *Switzerland*,
Mississippi River, March 1, 1863.

Gen. Alfred W. Ellet:

General: I have the honor to report to you that I left the *Era* No. 5 in charge of Capt. A. Connor, on Feb. 23, and proceeded up the river on the 25th with instructions from Admiral Porter to take the *Switzerland* and protect her machinery with cotton bales in order to run the batteries at Vicksburg. On the 27th I received the following dispatch from Admiral Porter [given above], and immediately started down, and reached the fleet below Yazoo River, on the morning of the 28th. Capt. Connor came on board and reported that the

Era had been taken from him by order of Major General Grant and scuttled in the middle of the river. No reason was assigned for this disposition of a valuable boat. The 170 bales of cotton upon her were set ashore. Col. Woods, who bore the orders of Gen. Grant, has, I am informed by Capt. Connor, permitted his men to seize and appropriate, not only the few articles of clothing which some of my men had left on board, but also, to rip up several of the cotton bales and use their contents for bedding. The following is the order which Capt. Connor was permitted to see, in relation to this appropriation of private and public property in the possession of my officers:

Headquarters 15th Army Corps, Feb. 27, 1863.

Capt. Connor: Col. Woods has orders as to what you will do. You must send all the negroes you have, early tomorrow morning, to report here under a Sergeant or Corporal. I have wondered why you have not already sent them. I give them rations for one day only; for your men for four days. The negroes will be put to work at once.

Yours truly,

J. H. HAMMOND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

No receipt was given for the cotton, to Capt. Connor, nor has one been sent to me. I would respectfully request instructions in regard to the course I should pursue in this matter, as I do not wish to be held responsible for losses to the Government, which occurred during my absence and without my consent.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET,
Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

No official report of the destruction of the Era during this scare, has been found, other than the statement in the Colonel's report, but a well authenticated account of it is found in the diary of Second Engineer, David E. Hooper, one of the crew who participated in it, and it is here reproduced, being undoubtedly correct in every substantial particular: The diary says: "We went into bayou with the Era and stayed with her until ordered to destroy her. Reuben Townsend, Samuel Weaver (an assistant engineer) and myself were detailed for the work. We took her into the Mississippi, after cutting holes in her sides to let water into the hull. The boat was soon caught in a large eddy, and filling rapidly, as she went down, turning over rather sooner than we expected, and rushing to the upper side, we went overboard. Fortunately the small boat we expected to get away in, broke loose, and, after a good ducking and some swimming, we all

"three got into it, and made our way safely to shore. The Era was then nowhere to be seen."

Just before starting south with his Brigade, Gen. Ellet transmitted to the War Secretary the reports he had received from the ram fleet commander, with the following message:

Headquarters Mississippi River Marine Brigade,
St. Louis, March 10, 1863.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War:—

Sir:—I have the honor to enclose you a copy of Col. Chas. Rivers Ellet's report, together with other papers containing the orders from Rear Admiral Porter, under which Col. Ellet was acting when the misfortune of the loss of the Queen of the West occurred. I also send you a copy of Admiral Porter's order recalling Col. Ellet from Napoleon (for the protection of his gun-boats against an anticipated attack from the rebel rams) when engaged fitting up the Switzerland for another run past the Vicksburg batteries, for the purpose of endeavoring to recapture the Queen of the West.

I have the honor to remain,

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

Meantime there had been formed and started what was known as the Yazoo Pass expedition, made up of gunboats, rams, and a large body of troops on transports. It was to find its devious way through the channel known as the Yazoo Pass, to Moon Lake, and hence through the Tallahatchie into the upper Yazoo. Explorations and reports as to the route had indicated that, in the prevailing high water, there was sufficient depth to carry the whole fleet through. The rams *LIONESS* and *FULFLEX* were sent with this expedition. The gunboats *Chillicothe*, *Baron De Kalb*, and tin-clad *Rattler*, were under Lieut. Commander Watson Smith, whose mission and instructions were to clear and open the way for transports and troops to the Yazoo, through this route. It soon proved to be a difficult undertaking, for while the water was sufficient, the stream was narrow and tortuous, and for long distances overhung with trees, which had to be cleared, or avoided, which resulted in frequent delays, and much damage to the boats. Men with axes and pikes were kept constantly on duty, on the upper decks, to cut limbs of trees, and prevent damage. On the second day a colored deck hand on the *LIONESS* was instantly killed by a limb of

a tree falling on him. Finally the naval section reached Moon Lake, and waited for the army contingent, whose transports had even greater difficulty in making their way through. Brig. Gen. Ross commanded this part of the expedition. After several days delay, the flotilla again moved, the *Lioness* leading as they started down the Tallahatchie. On the second day out smoke ahead warned of an enemy, and on turning a bend a small side wheel steamer was found at a landing, her crew occupied in burning cotton on the banks. The *Lioness* advanced upon her, firing several shots by way of an invitation to surrender, but the craft attempted flight. Finding she was being overhauled she hoisted white flags, and at the same time ran ashore, and her crew, setting her on fire, escaped. When the *Lioness* reached her she was a mass of flame, and her crew had disappeared in the woods. Later on, as cotton was found, the *Lioness*, and other boats were protected by rows of bales, for which they were soon to feel the need. For, as they advanced, they encountered felled trees, logs and rafts, at various points, and found picket stations of the enemy, and the rattle of musketry from scouting parties, concealed in the woods, kept her men on the alert. There were constant delays, and to add to the difficulties Lt. Commander Smith became crazy, and had to be superseded by Lt. Commander Foster. The naval section was four days working its way down to the Yazoo, where, at Greenwood, was understood to be a strong fortification—known as Fort Pemberton. Another obstruction was here found, in sunken steamers and barges. After much effort the gunboats were brought up within range of the fort, and a bombardment was commenced, and continued four hours. The army section failed to arrive, and during the night the rebels mounted two heavy guns, which, next morning, compelled the *Chillicothe* to move out of their range, after a shell had entered a port hole, and killed three gunners. The gunboats were unable to approach so as to command a view of the works from an advantageous position, and the army did not arrive. Beside, the low lands in the vicinity were so flooded that a land attack was simply out of the question, when at length the boats with troops had arrived. After several efforts and consultations, the attempt to take the fort was abandoned, and the fleet began its withdrawal, and to make its way out, by the same devious route it came in. The vessels of the entire fleet were

much battered and disfigured by their encounters with trees and logs, and most of them were a sorry sight, when they reached the Mississippi again. The *FULTON*, though with the expedition, was not put at the front, and the men of the *LIONESS* were not aware of her presence in the fleet till the expedition had returned. In the Lieut. Commander's report to Admiral Porter, dated Coldwater, March 5, he says: "My first knowledge of the *Petrel* and *LIONESS* and *FULTON* being attached to the expedition was after entering the Yazoo Pass. . . . rations issued for *Lioness* thirteen days, *Fulton* seven," and on the 7th, he says, in another letter to Porter: "The *LIONESS* has eighty-five bales of cotton for defense, two deep before the boilers. The *QUEEN* [meaning *FULTON*] cannot carry any on the sides, forward." "This cotton" says Porter's History—"was turned over to the Navy authorities on arriving at the station above Vicksburg." The expedition occupied most of the month of March, and proved an entire failure.

The hasty retirement of the rebels "*Queen*" and "*Webb*" to their lair up Red river and connecting waters, where the gunboats could not follow (had there been any) but from whence they could, as they had so effectively demonstrated, sally forth on mischief bent, whenever they desired, gave Admiral Farragut (who was again closely co-operating with Gen. Banks, below) considerable concern, and he now, with his best two vessels—the *Hartford* and *Albatross*—made his way slowly up the river again, and on the 20th of March, reached anchorage below Warrenton. He was prepared, with the heavy guns of these two vessels, to silence the batteries as he should pass up by night, but to his surprise no response was made, and soon his boats were at anchor, near the foot of the canal. Farragut at once sent communications to Grant and Porter, his messengers crossing the peninsula along the canal. Porter was temporarily absent looking after matters in the Yazoo. The first result of the communications was the sending of a barge of coal by night to float down to the Admiral's fleet, and it was safely secured by the *Albatross*. The next object sought by Farragut, and likewise favorably acceded to constitutes another epoch in our ram fleet history.

Among the arrivals at Young's Point, just at this time, (March 22) was that of the Mississippi Marine Brigade, with its eight large barricaded steamers, under command of Brig. A. W. Ellet. The ram

fleet was a subordinate part of his command. The previous cordial relations of Farragut and Ellet were at once resumed. The object of the former in coming up to Vicksburg being made known, Ellet promptly proffered two rams for the purpose: the SWITZERLAND and LANCASTER. From the correspondence leading up to this arrangement, it will be seen that Gen. Grant's chief concern was co-operation of boats for getting his troops over the river, for the attack on the Warrenton batteries, while Farragut's dominant purpose was securing rams both as a defense of his vessels below, against the raiders from Red river, and to assure the effectual blockade of that stream.

FARRAGUT AND GRANT, ON RUNNING THE BLOCKADE WITH TWO RAMS.

Farragut to Grant, Below Vicksburg, March 22, 1863:—

I regret that I did not see Admiral Porter, as he no doubt would have sent down at least two of Ellet's rams. The two rams and one ironclad would make the blockade of Red River complete. There are only two [rebel] boats fitted as rams: the Queen of the West and Webb. There are also other river boats fitted with cotton bales for the purpose of boarding our gun-boats. The Webb is at Alexandria, repairing, and the Queen of the West is now in the Archafakya.

Grant to Farragut in reply, March 22:—

It is a matter of the utmost importance to cut off trade with the Red River country. I do not know what Admiral Porter would suggest if he were here, but I think he might possibly spare one or more of the rams. * * *

Farragut to Grant, March 23:—

I gave it [the Warrenton battery] a pretty good shelling today, and will be ready to act in concert with your troops, and afford every facility in my power, whenever they are ready. I will cover the landing, but in case the ram Switzerland comes down in time she will be best suited to land the troops. But in case she does not get down in time the Albatross will do it.

Grant to Farragut, in postscript to letter of same date:

"Captain Walke * * * asked me yesterday for cotton bales with which to pack two of the rams, for the purpose of sending them to join you. I promised him anything in the world the army has for accomplishment of his purpose, and presume the vessels will be sent. I look upon it of vast importance that we should hold the river securely between Vicksburg and Port Hudson."

Gen. Ellet realized that there was likely to be a conflict of authority over the command of the rams, and that any mistake by him might involve him in a serious tangle. He at once addressed both Farragut, and Walke, asking their wishes in the matter of sending down the rams. Farragut frankly repeated, and even pressed, the request he had made of Porter for two rams, but Walke after advising with fleet Captains Breeze and Greer, attempted to order the SWITZERLAND, regardless of Gen. Ellet, and was promptly informed by Col. Charles Ellet, her commander, that his immediate superior was Gen. Ellet, then present, and that orders must come from him. That this conflict of authority was now on, is fully apparent in Walke's letter to Porter (23d), and it was only averted by Porter's absence, and the urgent necessity for immediate action. In the letter alluded to, Walke says: "I advised with Captains Breeze and Greer as to the propriety of sending one of our rams at least to Admiral Farragut, in which they acquiesced; but when I proposed to send Col. [Chas. R.] Ellet, the commander of the SWITZERLAND, he declined to obey my orders during the presence of Gen. [Alfred W.] Ellet, who had just arrived with the Marine Brigade, and who claims to have command of the rams. At a very late hour last night, in the rain, the inclosed dispatch [asking for copy of Farragut's request for rams] was sent to me from Gen. Ellet, requesting an immediate answer. I read the dispatch and returned a verbal answer that it was unnecessary, as the service of the rams was not indispensable."

Two days later another letter from Captain Walke to Admiral Porter says: "I received the enclosed letter from Gen. Ellet last evening, conveying the first intelligence of his intention to send the SWITZERLAND and LANCASTER below Vicksburg. I informed the General that I could not, under present circumstances, send or accompany the rams down the river, etc."

Capt. Breeze's letter to Porter of same date, fully sustains this view: He says: "Capt. Walke has just come up. He says Gen. Ellet sent for him to come and see him; that he had dispatches, etc. He talks very large, from what Walke says, and implies a command of the river [ram] fleet with his. Farragut is anxious for a ram or two, etc. Walke wants to know whether he has any right to order these rams. I tell him, yes. I think you had better settle Gen. Ellet's powers over the rams as soon as possible. . . ."

Quite in contrast with the foregoing was this letter of Admiral Farragut to Gen. Ellet.

U. S. Flagship Hartford, Below Vicksburg, March 23, 1863.

Dear General: I have this moment heard from Colonel Abbott of your arrival above Vicksburg with your rams, and sincerely thank you for the offer of the Switzerland to accompany me down the river. I had written a communication to Admiral Porter saying how much I would be gratified to have two rams and an ironclad to assist in maintaining the blockade of Red River and to keep the police of the river generally between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, particularly as I had learned through the newspapers that you were on your way down the river, and anxious to repair the loss of the Queen of the West and the Indianola. I shall be most happy to see you on board this ship, with the Colonel, for consultation.

I am very respectfully,

D. G. FARRAGUT.

Rear Admiral Com'dg West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Following the conference thus invited, a more formal letter from Admiral Farragut paved the way for the General's action. It reads:

U. S. Flagship Hartford, Below Vicksburg, March 23, 1863.

Brigadier General Alfred W. Ellet, Commanding Mississippi Marine Brigade:

General: I have written Admiral Porter to the effect that I am most desirous of having an ironclad gun-boat and two rams below Vicksburg to maintain the control of the river between this place and Port Hudson. The Red River trade is now the only resource of the enemy for their supplies at both Vicksburg and Port Hudson. The failure of my vessels to get to Port Hudson has reduced me to the necessity of asking the above assistance from Admiral Porter, but I am unwilling to interfere with the Admiral's command in any way, but I am assured that if he were here he would grant the assistance I so much need to carry out this great object. I beg to assure you that nothing would be more gratifying to me, than to have two of your rams; and I remain, truly your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT.

Rear Admiral.

Upon receipt of the foregoing, Ellet at once addressed this note to Walke, who made the reply, referred to in his letter to Porter. Each reads in full as follows:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Autocrat, March 24, 1863.

Captain Walker, Commanding Lafayette:

Captain: I have received a written communication from Admiral Farragut in which he informs me that he had requested from Admiral Porter an ironclad gun-boat and two rams to enable him to hold the river between Vicksburg and Port Hudson. In consequence of the failure to get the fleet above that point he is entirely too weak to accomplish this great object unaided. It is my purpose to send past the batteries tonight, in compliance with this request the Switzerland and Lancaster, and shall be glad if you conclude to send a gun-boat to be informed, that we may act in concert.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

U. S. S. Lafayette, Above Vicksburg, March 24, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet:

General: I regret that I can not, under the present circumstances, send or accompany the Switzerland and Lancaster tonight with an ironclad, as you propose, but with a hearty good will and sincere prayer for their success, I am

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. WALKER,
Capt. U. S. N.

The following from General Grant indicates what he was doing while the foregoing correspondence was in progress:

Before Vicksburg, March 24, 1863.

Brigadier General Ellet, Commanding Marine Brigade:

I am just informed that to insure success of the enterprise against Warrenton, ten or twelve small boats will be required. May I request that you furnish that number. If it is intended to send a ram past Vicksburg tonight they could be sent by her; if not, by sending them down the canal tonight to the lower end, Colonel Woods, who will command the expedition and who is now there, will get them. I will see that these boats are returned.

U. S. GRANT.

Ellet's response further develops the proposed plans, no allusion being made to the refusal of co-operation by Porter's gunboats—a circumstance which would have given pause to any but the lion-hearted commander, Ellet was. His answer was: "I have arranged with Admiral Farragut to send two rams down to his assistance. These vessels when safely below, will with the *Albatross*, according to ar-

arrangement already made with the officer commanding the troops opposite Warrenton, convey the troops across to attack the batteries, while the flagship *Hartford*, silences their guns. No small boats will therefore be needed for the purpose contemplated today."

Immediate preparations were now made for running the batteries by the two rams. Additional protection for their engines and boilers was given, by piling cotton bales beside them, and fuel, stores and ammunition provided for a protracted cruise. Crews were selected with care from volunteers, some few objecting, and even refusing to go. The cases of these will receive mention later on. Then the fewest possible number for each vessel was placed thereon, to take her past the batteries, and the rest sent across to join her below. The command of the two vessels was given Col. Charles Rivers Ellet, who went, with Major Lawrence in personal command, on the SWITZERLAND, and his second officer was Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, in personal command of the LANCASTER. No complete lists of officers or crews actually making this famous "run" have been preserved, but a few are named in the official reports, and occasional mention of others is found in diaries. Sam Goff was the sergeant in charge of one of the SWITZERLAND's bow guns, and James Buckner of the other.

The General's instructions for the run, and for subsequent operations, were as follows:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Autocrat, Above Vicksburg, March 24, 1863.
Colonel Charles Rivers Ellet, Commanding Ram Fleet:

Colonel: You will proceed in command of the steamer rams Switzerland and Lancaster to pass the batteries at Vicksburg tonight, and report to Admiral Farragut below. Take every precaution to prevent lights being seen on your boats during the passage down. Take only men enough to run the boats: have the yawls on the starboard guards ready for instant use in case of necessity, and hang knotted ropes from either side to the waters edge, to which men could hang to avoid steam. You will not, in the event that either boat is disabled, attempt, under fire of the batteries, to help her off with the other boat, but will run on down, it being of primary importance that one boat at least should get safely by. The purpose for which you are sent below is to assist in keeping possession of the river between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and cutting off the enemy's communication with, and supplies from Red River and its tributaries, and to aid in repelling the rebel rams and cotton-clad steamers, if they should attack Farragut's vessels. You

will afford all the aid in your power to the military force which will attack Warrenton tomorrow. Report to me by every convenient opportunity.

Very respectfully,

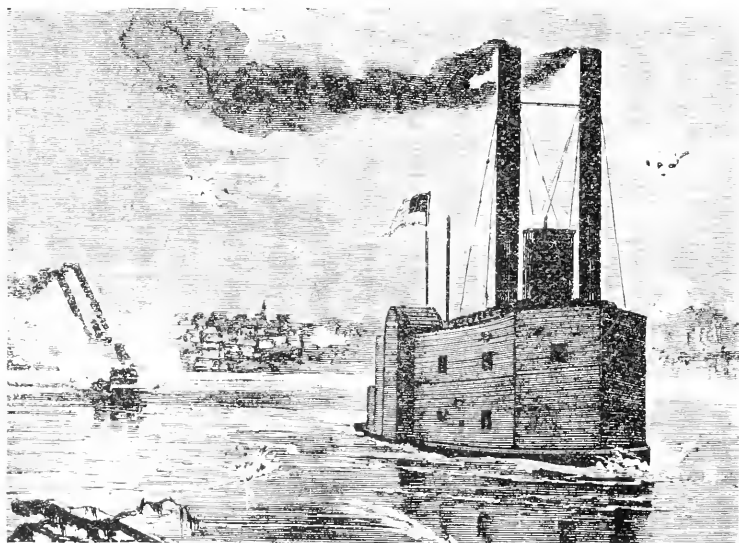
ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brigadier General Commanding.

The time was soon at hand for the perilous undertaking. A graphic description of it written by Capt. Grandall at the time is here given as our historical account of the affair: "The whole night of the 24th was occupied in taking on coal and stores, and placing ammunition in their holds, transferring crews, and incidental changes. This was so belated them that they did not get started till just at day break, instead of at two o'clock as intended. After sending all the spare men of the crews over the point and down below on the levee, to join their boats when they should get below, General Ellet and myself took our gig and were rowed down, in the night and darkness, through the canal, to the lower side, opposite the rebel batteries. Leaving here our gig and oarsmen, we walked along the levee near the river bank, anxiously noting the approach of light which would prove betrayer of our presence as we were in full view of the rebel batteries. There we knew we should witness the greater part of the fight, for, as you pass on down the levee you lose sight of both river and batteries. We paced up and down discussing the probability of the success of the devoted boats and their brave crews. Day was fast dawning and we feared something would delay them too long. Indeed it is even now too late to hope that a vessel may escape through darkness the deadly fire of their guns. Perhaps some unforeseen delay has induced Colonel Ellet to forego the expedition till next night. No, there is the flash of the first gun, far up in the bend, at the upper battery. They are coming, and in the broad day-light, and must run this terrible gauntlet, in open day. Low and distinct comes the rumbling roar of the guns, shot following shot in quick succession. Then comes a lull in the firing; Then louder and quicker firing from batteries farther down. One by one the great guns, down the horrible semi-circle of batteries, join in the awful cannonade, till the heavens are rent with the terrific sound of shot and shell. Full fifteen minutes, of the thirty-five required to run by, have passed. We know the boats are nearing us because the fire of the forts which we

"can see is gradually getting farther down. Why do the boats not make their appearance? Twenty minutes have elapsed and still they have not got far enough down the long bend in front of the city for us to see them. A gun from the battery right opposite us now sends a shot, away up stream. We look in vain to see the boats come plowing down. Can it be they are disabled?" "God grant them a safe passage down,"—fervently ejaculates the General. My heart responds an Amen. Still they are not in sight. It is broad day, and the roar of the angry cannon is incessant. Some disaster must have befallen the boats; for thirty minutes are past and now the big guns of the whole fort opposite, are firing. They must be near us, above the neck of the woods which cuts off our view of the river! Surely they will now soon be out of this great peril. We start hurriedly down the levee, to be at the appointed place, more than a mile below, when they arrive. Ever and anon we stop to look and listen. Still the fire—deadly and terrific—continues. They are not yet in sight, and we turn back and eagerly strain our eyes to get the first glimpse of their forms through the trees. We see one coming—her dark hull can faintly be seen through the branches—but why is she running so slow? Now she comes in plain view. It is the SWITZERLAND and she is floating, disabled, stern, foremost! We hasten back and dimly discern the form of the LANCASTER farther up—also slowly floating. What a fearful situation! Helpless and under the concentrated fire of all the guns of Vicksburg's batteries. Calling to our oarsmen we rush to our yawl, near the mouth of the canal, in a little bayou, and just then comes a prolonged cheer from the rebels across the river. Look! The LANCASTER is sinking—bow foremost. Quick with the yawl! Seizing it bodily we drag it over a levee into the slough running out into the river, and quickly divesting ourselves of overcoats and side-arms, we two, jump into the boat and row with all haste out to the SWITZERLAND. She is nearly opposite us, and about one-third of the way across the river, and slowly floating along. The enemy is still pouring deadly missiles into her. We row directly for her. The shells tear over us, from the batteries opposite. Glancing above we see the ill-fated LANCASTER capized, submerged, and only a part of her wreck visible. On we pull for dear life, till we reach the Switz-

"*VERLAND*. Her fore-castle and side from the batteries are crowded with her crew. There was no panic, and save the scalded negro fire-men, none were hurt, though the boat was terribly torn up, and had two cannon shot in her boilers. In a moment it was decided not to abandon her, as she was not sinking. Yawls were plying from the "*LANCASTER*'s wreck to the shore, amid the shot of the enemy, flying thick and fast. Every moment a howling missile of death would scream over our heads, and plow the beach, throwing sand or water



Rams *Switzerland* and *Lancaster* Running the Vicksburg Batteries. The Former is Temporarily Disabled by the Fire of the Enemy, but the Latter is Sunk and Lost.

"twenty feet into the air. As we float down only the shots of the lower battery can reach us, and they are fired from four guns at regular intervals. An officer watches the battery and the instant a puff of smoke is seen, all step behind the heavy bulk-heading which only a chance shot could pass through. Finally, one strikes—passing almost through, but lodging in a coal bunker—nobody hurt! The "*Albatross* is laying just below, out of range, and the "*Hartford* is in

"sight, below the Warrenton batteries. The SWITZERLAND'S flag was "kept floating all the time in defiance of the enemy. Just before they "ceased firing on us we fired one of our small parrot guns at them, "just by way of a parting salute to which they replied without effect. "As we float on the shots fall wider and wider of the mark. The gall- "lant commander of the LANCASTER has got his men all ashore, and is "now pulling down to overtake us, to render aid if needed. The "Hartford steams up and opens upon the Warrenton batteries. The "Albatross sees our plight, and is coming up to help us, and taking "two lines from her we are towed to shore, about a mile and a half "below the mouth of the canal."

The cabin of the Switzerland was riddled and torn by shot, and movables scattered and tumbled in wildest confusion. But the disabling injury to her boilers was repairable, and a force was set to work on them at once, and in three days she was ready for duty. The complement of her crew was made up from the LANCASTER'S men, and under Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, she safely ran the batteries at Warrenton during the night of March 30, reporting to Admiral Farragut lying below.

Having thus reproduced an observer's account of this notable affair, which attracted wide attention, and naturally elicited some unfavorable comment and criticism, at the time, we will now give the official reports, containing important details:

U. S. Steamer Switzerland, Below Vicksburg, March 25, 1863.

Brigadier General Alfred W. Ellet, Commanding Mississippi Marine Brigade :

General. I have the honor to report to you that in compliance with your instructions, I started before day-break this morning with the rams Switzerland and Lancaster to pass the Vicksburg batteries. The short time which I was allowed for preparation, and the necessity of taking in large quantities of stores of provision, delayed our departure until it was nearly light. The wind was extremely unfavorable, and notwithstanding the caution with which the boats put out into the middle of the stream, the puff of their escaping pipes could be heard with fatal distinctness below. The flashing of the enemy's signal lights from battery to battery, as we neared the city, showed me that concealment was useless. The morning, too, was beginning to break, and I saw that if we were to pass at all it was to be done at once. I ordered my pilots to give the Switzerland full headway and we went round the point under 169 pounds of steam. The rebels opened fire at once, but the first 15 or 20 shots were badly aimed. As we got nearer to the guns, however, the fire

became more accurate and rapid. Shot after shot struck my boat, tearing everything to pieces before them. A few hundred yards behind us, the Lancaster, under command of Lieut. Colonel John A. Ellet, still steamed speedily down, but I could see the splinters fly from her at every discharge. When about three quarters of a mile below the point, and full in front of the enemy's heaviest guns, a 10-inch shell plunged through the boiler deck of the Switzerland and into her center boiler. The explosion of steam was very severe, and was welcomed by the traitors with shouts of exultation. The engines stopped at once, and even the pilot house was filled to suffocation with the hot steam, but the pilots stood to their posts like men, and by my orders kept her out in the stream, when she floated down with the current. The enemy relaxed their fire, and the steam had scarcely cleared away from the Switzerland, when I saw the Lancaster blown up. She commenced to sink rapidly, and in a few minutes went down bow foremost. I ordered the crew of the Switzerland into as secure a position as possible, and floated past the remaining batteries without any loss of life, or material damage to the boat. A few moments after your arrival on board with Adjutant General Crandall, and when opposite the mouth of the canal Lieut. Col. Ellet came alongside in a yawl, having rowed down to us, through a fire of grape and shell, to offer us any assistance in his power. He had previously set ashore his own crew and wounded men, and fired the upper works of his boat. When out of range, the Switzerland was met by the Albatross and towed in to shore. I can not conclude this report without referring to the heroic conduct of the officers and crew of the Switzerland. No fear, or lack of discipline was exhibited by any person on board, and although we were within pistol shot of shore, not a man attempted to desert the boat or leave his post, without orders. Among those who especially distinguished themselves by their resolution and courage, were Major John W. Lawrence, Pilot Alexander McKay, Lieut. Edward C. Ellet and Third Engineer Granville Roberts. This is the second time the three last named officers have passed the batteries at Vicksburg. The damage to the Switzerland's boilers is considerable, but will be repaired in a few days by the machinists now on board. Her engines and hull are in good condition. Her loss comprises only three negroes badly scalded. One man on the Lancaster was drowned another severely scalded, and Pilot T. W. L. Kitson lost a foot. The very limited loss of life on board both boats is due to the extremely small number of men who were selected to run the boats through. The remainder of the crews were sent across by land. I enclose Lieut. Colonel Ellet's report of the Lancaster.

Very respectfully,

CHAS. RIVERS ELLET,
Colonel Commanding.

On Board *Autoerat*, Above Vicksburg, March 25, 1863,

Col. Chas. Rivers Elliot, Com'dy Ram Fleet:

Colonel: I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your instructions I left my anchorage above the mouth of the canal at 4:30 o'clock this morning on board the U. S. Steamer *Lancaster*, for the purpose of running the enemy's batteries, at Vicksburg. The lights were all extinguished, and every precaution taken to prevent giving any knowledge of our approach. I endeavored to conduct the movements of my vessel as silently as possible, allowing her to float part of the time, and occasionally righting her up by going ahead on the slow-bell. Unfortunately, the escape of steam from her smoke stacks was very loud. In addition to this the night was clear, calm and starlight, with a slight breeze setting forth from us directly toward the rebel batteries. From the character of the night, and the warmth of our reception I am led to believe that our very first movements were heard by the enemy. Keeping the distance of about 200 yards between my vessel and the *Switzerland*, I approached within about half mile of the point of the peninsula very slowly, when the sudden flashes of signals, along the whole line of the enemy's works, gave unmistakable evidence that our movements were apprehended. I then ordered on a full head of steam, expecting every moment to receive the enemy's fire. When within about 400 yards of the point of the peninsula, the enemy opened fire upon me, with a brisk fire from the upper batteries, but the shot fell wide of the mark. Rounding the point, I ordered the pilot to steer well to the star board, to prevent following immediately in the wake of the *Switzerland*. When just abreast of the upper batteries the first shot struck my vessel, passing through both smoke stacks. The fire continued almost incessantly, but without serious damage, for about five minutes after this time, when a heavy shot passed through the vessel, immediately under the pilot house, carrying away the steps which led from the cabin into the pilot house, and wounding Mr. T. W. L. Kitson, steersman, whom I had placed at the foot of the steps, to be in readiness to take the wheel should my other pilot be disabled. We were now just opposite the water batteries, and they poured a very active fire upon us, striking the vessel in every part but a vital one. At this time I entertained the most sanguine expectations of getting my vessel past in safety. This thought, however, was speedily dispelled by a heavy shot which exploded the steam drum, and enveloped the entire vessel in a terrible cloud of steam, driving the engineers and firemen from their posts, and compelling every one upon the lower and gun-deck to seek the bow of the boat outside of the wooden bulk-head, where a friendly breeze shielded them from the execracting tortures of the hot steam. About this time a heavy plunging shot struck her in the frailest part of her stern, passing longitudinally through her piercing the hull in the center near the bow, and causing an enormous leak in the vessel. The pilot, Mr. Andrew J. Dennis, remained at the wheel, giving directions to the helpless vessel, until the wheel was demolished by a shot, from the effects of which he miraculously escaped. He re-

ported the damage to me and I sent him below to control the tiller ropes by hand, and then went down myself to ascertain the condition of the hull. I found her sinking very fast, and partly turned round by an eddy, so that her star-board side was subjected to the hottest fire. I therefore ordered the two yawls to be brought from the star-board side to the larboard quarter of the bow, where the hull of the vessel afforded them the greatest protection and then ordered my men to take to their boats, first providing for the wounded and scalded. The water was by this time running over the decks, and I found it would be impossible to secure her to the shore. I therefore set her upper works on fire by discharging my pistols into the cotton. This was superfluous, however, for a few minutes afterward she plunged into the flood—bow foremost. I had abundance of room in my two yawls for every soul on board, but unfortunately some of my men attempted to swim ashore, in so doing, Orderly Sergeant William H. McDonald was drowned. While in our yawls making our escape from the sinking wreck, we were subjected to a galling fire of shot and shell. As soon as the yawls reached the shore the men sought shelter in the neighboring woods. I expressed my determination to go to the Switzerland, and two faithful negroes rowed me to her.

My officers, soldiers and boatmen behaved with the utmost coolness and courage. There are some instances of heroic daring which deserve special mention. Among these were George W. Lindsey, first master; Henry S. Brown, chief engineer; Andrew J. Dennis, pilot; T. W. L. Kitson, steersman; George W. Andrews, carpenter, and Samuel Weaver, engineer. The two latter gentlemen passed the Vicksburg batteries on a former occasion on board the *Queen of the West*. It is extremely difficult to designate individuals when all did so nobly without doing injustice, but these men came under my own personal observation, and challenged my admiration by their great gallantry.

I am, Colonel, very respectfully,

JOHN A. ELLER,

Lieut. Col. Com'dg Lancaster.

As part of the history of this affair, we now reproduce correspondence, dispatches and reports, which very fully show its relation to other movements, and the views of it taken by the several commanders concerned. Admiral Porter arrived from the *Yazoo*, on the very day of this event, and at once addressed this communication to the commander of the Marine Brigade:

U. S. Miss, Squadron, Yazoo River, March 25, 1863.
Brigadier General Eller, Commander of Marine Miss, Squadron:

General: Will you please tell me by what authority you sent the rams *Lancaster* and *Switzerland* past the batteries at Vicksburg in open day without taking any precaution to guard their hulls? One of these vessels has, in con-

sequence, been sunk, and the other damaged extensively, which might very well have been expected under the circumstances. You will also inform me who were the commanders of these vessels and all the circumstances attending this unfortunate affair.

Very respectfully, etc.,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Mississippi Squadron.

To which Gen. Ellet promptly made the following reply, which was somewhat a plea in extenuation, for what was charged as want of due precaution, in the belated start of the boats:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,

Flagship Autocrat, Above Vicksburg, March 25, 1863.

David D. Porter, Acting Rear Admiral Mississippi Squadron:

Admiral: In compliance with your instructions I would respectfully report that the *Switzerland* and *Lancaster* were sent past the batteries of Vicksburg by my orders this morning, in consequence of receiving an urgent request from Admiral Farragut for their assistance to aid him in keeping the river open from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, and in destroying the enemy's communication from Red River; also for the purpose of passing troops over the river to Warrenton, to aid in the destruction of the formidable batteries now being constructed at that point. The boats started before daylight. You have been misinformed of the passage being made in open day. It is true that in consequence of the injury that the boats sustained, they did not get past before the sun had risen, yet, if they had not been injured and obliged to float, they would have made the passage before it was fully light. The *Lancaster*, I regret to say, is a total loss. Her boilers were exploded, and being a very rotten boat, she went to pieces and sank immediately. She was commanded by Lieut. Colonel John A. Ellet. The *Switzerland* was commanded by Colonel Charles R. Ellet in person, who also commanded the expedition. She received a number of shots, and being a stronger boat, was not much injured. Her boiler was exploded by a plunging shot. In other respects the damage was not material. She will be repaired in a few days, and is in a position where I trust she will be able to redeem whatever of mishap has attended the passage of the Vicksburg batteries.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brigadier General Commanding.

The same may be said of Gen. Ellet's report to the Secretary of War, which follows:

Flagship *Autocrat*, Above Vicksburg, March 26, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: I have the honor to report that on yesterday in response to a request made by Admiral Farragut for two rams to aid him in maintaining possession of the Mississippi River between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and to destroy the enemy's communication from Red River, I ordered the *Switzerland* and *Launcester*, the latter in command of Lieut. Colonel John A. Ellet, the former, commanded by Major John Lawrence the expedition being under the command of Colonel Charles R. Ellet, who was on the *Switzerland* in person to pass the batteries and join Admiral Farragut below. I regret to say that in the performance of this order the *Launcester* was blown up, and totally destroyed, by the terrible fire from the enemy's batteries. The *Switzerland* also received a 10-inch shell in her boiler, when opposite the center of the enemy's line of defenses, totally disabling her. She floated past and finally escaped without more serious injury. I have now on board a large force of mechanics, who will have her repaired in a few days, again ready for efficient service. I enclose a copy of the letter received from Admiral Farragut, which, taken in connection with my own knowledge of the great importance of the interest involved, induced me to undertake the enterprise. I deem it proper in this report to call your especial attention to the great gallantry displayed by the officers and men composing the crews of these vessels, under circumstances of the most imminent peril. When I arrived on board the *Switzerland*, which I did in company with W. D. Crandall, Assistant Adjutant General, as soon as I discovered she was disabled, I found perfect order prevailing. Although the shots were still falling fast, not a man showed the slightest trepidation, and a proud determination was expressed never to lower the tattered remnant of a flag yet flying, which had been run up by their Colonel's own hands in reply to the enemy's wild clamor, when they supposed that his boat was destroyed by seeing the escape of steam. Of Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, I must make special mention, who, after saving his own crew from the sunken *Launcester*, was pulled in an open yawl by two negroes, for a distance of near two miles to offer his assistance to the crew of the disabled *Switzerland*. I enclose the separate report of Colonel Charles R. Ellet and Lieut. Colonel John A. Ellet.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

General Grant in a dispatch to Halleck, on the morning of the 25th, thus mentions the affair: "Two rams attempted to run the blockade this morning. One succeeded, in a damaged condition. They were intended to strengthen Farragut. . . ." A day or two later he reported more fully to Gen. Halleck: "On the morning of the 25th, General Ellet sent two rams, the *SWITZERLAND* and *LAN-*

LANCASTER to join Admiral Farragut. The first named ram received a shot in the boiler, long before reaching the front of the city. She floated down however, receiving more shots, but without materially further disabling her. She will be ready for service before to-morrow night, and is a fine vessel. The other boat received a shot and immediately went to pieces. A large part containing the machinery tipped over, spilling it in the river. The wreck floated down, and lodged at our lower pickets, bottom up. She was very rotten and worthless. The shot received would not have injured a sound vessel seriously. That is what Admiral Farragut and army officers who have examined the wreck report to me. Since no casualties occurred it was fortunate that she is lost; for had she not been at this time, she might have been at some other time, when more valuable vessels might have been risked, relying on her for assistance. It is almost certain that had she made one ram into another vessel, she would have closed up like a spy-glass encompassing all on board. . . ."

In his report of that date to Secretary Welles, Admiral Porter incloses the letter from Gen. Ellet, and says: "During my absence on an expedition into the enemy's country, Gen. Ellet, at the request of Admiral Farragut, sent the rams SWITZERLAND and LANCASTER to run the batteries at Vicksburg. The LANCASTER was sunk, and the SWITZERLAND disabled. These vessels were not at all prepared for so hazardous an adventure, nor at all suited for any service that will take them any distance from a machine shop."

Farragut thus writes to Porter, on the day of the affair: . . . "I have expressed the desire to you to have an ironclad, one at least, and two rams, to assist me in this matter [the blockading of Red river] and I now repeat it, so that when it becomes absolutely necessary for me to go down the river to replenish my provisions and resume my duties in command of the blockading squadron, that I may do so without reopening the Red river trade. There is nothing below, or in Red river, that could successfully compete with an ironclad and two rams. General Ellet called on me to know if I desired two of his rams, and I replied to him that I needed such vessels, and would be very much gratified to have them, but would not interfere with Admiral Porter. I understood his boats to be a component part of your fleet. He said all he desired was to know if I considered

"it to the benefit of the country and of the cause, to have them below Vicksburg, to which I replied, 'Certainly,' and he said that was all he desired to know, and that he should run two down in the night. I told him, although I was very anxious for the force I had asked of you, and was ignorant of your relative positions, I feared he was wrong in doing so, although it might be done with safety during the darkness of the night, which he said he would avail himself of. I had made an arrangement with General Grant, and more particularly with Colonel Woods, 76th Ohio Vols., to convey a party to Warrenton, and cover their attack at that place, for the purpose of breaking up a casemated battery the enemy had built there, which [expedition] General Ellet proposed that his rams could carry over, while we attacked the batteries, when they should arrive below. All these arrangements were made, the troops ready for embarkation, the night serene and beautiful, so much so that I sincerely hoped the General would not think of sending his vessels down. And just as I had come to that conclusion, between half past five and six in the morning, I heard the batteries open. I felt that all was lost, unless by the merest accident. My fears were realized; the LEXINGTON was totally destroyed; the SWITZERLAND had two shots in her boilers—otherwise not materially injured. My engineer says her boilers can be repaired in a week. Not a man killed; two or three unfortunate negroes were badly scalded, some of whom may die. It was a wonderful escape for the crew. I write this letter for two purposes—first, to exonerate myself from any charge of a disposition to interfere with your command, and, second, with a hope to excuse General Ellet from any feeling to do that which he thought would be disagreeable to you; but, on the contrary, all who surrounded him at the time thought, and so expressed themselves, that it would be in accordance with your wishes if you were present. . . . I deeply regret the rashness of Gen. Ellet in sending his boats past the batteries in broad day light, as it afforded the enemy nothing but target practice. . . ."

On the same day of writing this letter in Ellet's defense the Admiral wrote another to Grant, saying: "I have this moment received your kind note, and, like yourself, deeply regret the failure of the rams to reach me in order. I blame myself very much for not in-

"sisting on Gen. Ellet's waiting for a dark night. I was so much afraid of their impetuosity that it deprived me of sleep all night. But I never for a moment supposed that he would come down in the day time. The SWITZERLAND is not much injured. My engineers inform me she can be repaired in four days. But unless she goes below Warrenton to make her repairs she will be blockaded, so as to have to run it in the night, as the enemy is working very industriously to mount heavy guns. I have shelled them three or four times, very heavily, but with very slight effect, as they lie down until we are finished, and then get up and work industriously again. My isolated position renders it necessary that I should be very careful of my ships, and hence I shall drop down below the town until I know the result of your determination on the subject of attacking it. My idea was to have landed your men in the SWITZERLAND, and recovered the landing with my ship. . . ."

A letter from Porter to Farragut dated March 26, 1863, contains this mention: . . . "I have written the honorable Secretary, explaining how it was that the ram LANCASTER was lost. She was a miserable concern, and would not have been of the slightest use to you, all worn out. . . . General Ellet, with his new brigade, also belongs to my command, and I have been occupied all the morning with him. In relation to the SWITZERLAND keep her with you but, please make the commander understand that she is under your command, or he will go off on a cruise somewhere before you know it, and then get the ship in trouble. She is a very formidable ship as a ram, but I would never expect to see her again if she got out of your sight. With her and the *Albatross* you can defy all the vessels the rebels have. The great object is to cut off supplies. For that reason I sent down the QUEEN OF THE WEST and *Indianola*. I got them past the batteries without a hurt, as I would have done with the LANCASTER and SWITZERLAND had I been there. . . ."

The SWITZERLAND, now on detached duty must needs have her instructions. The following orders were received by her commander on their dates:

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, Yazoo River, March 27, 1863.

Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, Com'dg Ram Switzerland:

Sir: You will report yourself to Admiral Farragut, and until further

orders, act under his command. As you may not be familiar with the rules of the navy, I hereby inform you that you must do nothing—no matter how trifling—without an order or permission of Admiral Farragut, to whom you will present this order.

Respectfully, etc.,

DAVID D. PORTER,
Acting Rear Admiral.

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, March 28, 1863.

Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, Com'dg Ram Switzerland:

Sir: When your vessel is ready for service you will proceed to join Admiral Farragut, but be particular that the batteries at Warrenton are passed in the night when the moon is down.

I consider that the loss of the Lancaster was owing to proper precautions not having been taken in this respect, and when the object in view was not properly considered.

If the Admiral and Albatross have passed out of sight, you will move down within five miles of Grand Gulf, and pass that place at night, joining Admiral Farragut at Red River.

You will comply with these instructions to the letter.

Very respectfully, etc.,

DAVID D. PORTER.

To the latter communication the Commander of the ram, acting of course upon the advice of the General, replied as follows:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Autoerat, March 28, 1863.

David D. Porter, Acting Rear Admiral:

Admiral: Your communication bearing date March 28, giving me instructions in regard to my operations down the river, has been received.

I immediately referred them to Brig. Gen. Alfred W. Ellet, in accordance with a general order of the command now in force, which I enclose.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. ELLET,
Lieut. Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet.

The General had meantime prepared the following instructions for the cruise of the SWITZERLAND, and with them Lt. Col. Ellet lost no time in getting away:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Autoerat, March 28, 1863.

John A. Ellet, Lt. Col. Com'dg Switzerland:

Colonel: You will proceed on board the ram SWITZERLAND, now lying below the Vicksburg batteries, and assume command of that boat. You will

hurry the work of repairing the boat now progressing, and when ready for duty, will report to Admiral Farragut, on flagship Hartford, and during your stay below Vicksburg will receive orders from him and co-operate to the best of your ability to attain the object for which your boat was sent past the batteries, which was to destroy the enemy's communication with Red River and cut off his supplies and keep possession of the river between Vicksburg and Port Hudson. You will institute a most rigorous discipline, keeping at all times, both day and night, a competent and efficient watch to avoid being surprised. You will in all cases endeavor to find such a place for lying up that an enemy can not approach your boat without passing through deep water, and never on any account permit your steam to get so low that your boat can not be handled. In all other matters you must use your own good judgment and I have full confidence to believe that I shall hear a good account of you.

Very respectfully, etc.,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Brig. Gen. Com'dg M. M. Brigade.

The further correspondence between General Ellet and Admiral Porter, given below, indicates the latter's purpose of visiting his wrath upon the Lieut. Colonel, who was, however, already beyond his immediate reach. From the peaceful termination of the "conflict," which here reached its climax, and there being no attempt on the Admiral's part from that time on, to deal with either part of the General's command, except through him, in the regular way, it may be inferred (although there are no writings extant to show the fact) that such examinations into the General's authority, and the correct army and navy usages, in the transmittal of orders to subordinates, were gone into by the two, at the interview invited by the Admiral, as to lead both to make such concessions, as would be necessary, in the peculiar situation in which they found themselves. And it is greatly to the credit of these two brave, and patriotic men, that from that time forward their relations were harmonious and peaceful, if not always cordial.

Here follows the correspondence which closes the subject:

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, Yazoo River, March 31, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, Com'dg Marine Brigade, Miss. Squadron;

General: I have received a communication from Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet in relation to certain instructions I gave him about his operations down the Mississippi River. It appears that his communication was forwarded to

me by you, which I consider disrespectful. I have ordered the arrest of Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, and shall have him tried by court-martial.

It should be known to you that any order I give to any vessel of the Marine Brigade should be promptly obeyed. I do not recognize your authority to give any orders relating to the management of the Ram Fleet or the Brigade, without orders from me. The answer to my communication by Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet is evidently an attempt to disregard my authority, and I shall meet it, as I do all cases of insubordination, with that promptness necessary to keep up proper discipline.

I should like to see your answer to Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet.

Very respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,

Flagship *Autoerat*, Off Young's Point, April 1, 1863.

Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter, Miss. Squadron:

Admiral: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 31st of March, informing me that you had ordered the arrest of one of my officers, Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, for obedience to my orders. Permit me to say, Admiral, that I assume all the responsibility attaching to Lieut. Col. Ellet's course, who acted under a general order emanating from these headquarters to the effect that no officer of the Marine Brigade should move a vessel of this command, without first obtaining the sanction of the general commanding, or in his absence the highest officer present. Permit me further to state, that while I retain command of the brigade, no subordinate officer will be permitted to execute any order not transmitted through the proper military channel.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brig. Gen. Com'dg M. M. Brigade,

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, April 2, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, Com'dg M. M. Brigade, Miss. Squadron:

Sir: Will you please come on board the flagship? I wish to confer with you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

A few extracts from dispatches of the period, on the rebel side, will complete the story of this famous ram exploit, in which failure and success were so evenly balanced, and will give us a glimpse of the doughty old SWITZERLAND, under Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, her

future commander, pushing on down the river, for a long and successful cruise with Admiral Farragut.

General Pemberton at Jackson to Cooper, Richmond, Va., (25th):—

"Stevenson sends the following telegram this a. m.: 'Four gun-boats came to the turn at sunrise. Two attempted to pass. One was sunk with all on board. The other lies at the mouth of canal, apparently disabled.'" [Two days later he adds this information]: "The gun-boat sunk by us was the Lancaster; that which passed down was the Monitor, (?) the latter a total wreck."

Pemberton to Gardner, Port Hudson (31st): "The wreck of the ironclad Lancaster is floating down the river. Keep a sharp lookout for it, and if possible tow it ashore, and save guns and engine."

Bowen at Grand Gulf to Pemberton, (April 2): "The Hartford, Albatross and Switzerland passed down by here at 8:15 last evening."

Not receiving the customary acknowledgement of receipt of his report to the War office, Gen. Ellet (while enroute for the Tennessee river soon after) sent this dispatch from Cairo:

Flagship, Off Cairo, April 10, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: I have the honor to report that the ram Switzerland passed the Warrenton batteries on the night of the 30th [25th] of March and joined Admiral Farragut below. She was thoroughly repaired and in good condition. The Lancaster was the poorest boat in the Ram Fleet and was very rotten. I trust that it will not be regarded as a reckless adventure sending these boats past the Vicksburg batteries when it is remembered that they were the best that I could command, and the great importance to the country, if the passage was successfully made, be considered. The force under Admiral Farragut in my judgment, was very inadequate for the duty he had to perform and I feel satisfied of my success in getting one boat through to his support. The Switzerland is now commanded by Lieut. Colonel John A. Ellet and I shall confidently expect to hear a good account from her should she meet the enemy. I am ordered up Tennessee River with my entire command. Will proceed immediately upon taking some supplies.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

The following response from Mr. Stanton, revealed the fact that while reports had been plentiful at the Navy department, none whatever had been received from the ram fleet, at the War office:

Washington, D. C., April 13, 1863.

Brig. Gen. Ellet, Ram Fleet:

Sir: Your dispatch in relation to the *Switzerland* and *Launcester* has reached this Department.

An impression has been created that the loss of the *Launcester* was occasioned by some disobedience, or negligence of orders, on your part, although I do not entertain any such opinion. It would be well for you to make a detailed official report of the circumstances and orders under which you undertook to pass the Vicksburg batteries in order that the Department may be in condition to do you justice.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Immediately the General's response, following, was sent with the accompanying papers. This reply was a masterly presentation of the General's side of the case which it was evident was being made against him. But impatient of the mail's delay, the General added a telegraphic report, presenting the matter in still clearer and more convincing form, as given below:

Flagship *Autoerat*, April 13, 1863, 5:25 P. M.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your dispatch of this date. A detailed report of the loss of the *Launcester*, on the morning of the 25th inst., [ultimo] before Vicksburg, was sent to you by mail the following day, together with a copy of the letter from Admiral Farragut, asking the aid of two rams and one ironclad gun-boat. Admiral Porter was absent. Capt. Walke would not take the responsibility to respond. Not yet having reported to Admiral Porter, and conceiving the case to be one of urgent necessity, I offered to take the responsibility, and send the *Launcester* and *Switzerland*. Admiral Farragut gladly accepted the offer, and the boats went. I do not conceive that I acted against orders, not having yet received any orders from anybody, except those emanating direct from your Department, to report to Admiral Porter for duty as soon as the brigade was formed. If my acts meet with your approval I shall little regard any efforts of others to misrepresent me. I will forward you immediately duplicate copies of my report, and Admiral Farragut's letter, by mail.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brigadier General Commanding.

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Antocrat, Cairo, Ill., April 13, 1863.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: In accordance with your instructions received today by telegraph, I have the honor of forwarding you duplicate copies of my report regarding the loss of the Lancaster opposite Vicksburg, on the night of the 25th of March last; and also all the correspondence that passed between Admirals Farragut and Porter, Capt. Walke and myself, having reference to that event; also my letter of instruction to Col. Charles R. Ellet, previous to his starting on the expedition. I take the liberty of adding these papers in justice to myself, and the brave men who undertook to perform this perilous enterprise, under the impression that they were doing valuable service for their country, and were going to re-inforce a generous and gallant officer, in a dangerous situation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General Commanding.

Ample time seems to have been taken to review, and fully inquire into the subject, at the War office, as no further communication relating to it appears in the published records. But of date about a month latter, appears the following letter and inclosure, from Gen. Ellet to Captain Brooks, which are of interest, as fully revealing the inside facts, and the feelings of the General himself, toward those concerned:

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade,
Flagship Antocrat, Mound City, May 13, 1863.

Captain James C. Brooks, Assistant Quartermaster:

Dear Sir: I inclose you the minutes of the circumstances, correspondence, etc., connected with the loss of the Lancaster. I feel now that it is necessary that I should receive some expression of opinion from the Department respecting that matter. I shall be glad if you press the case upon the attention of the Secretary of War. If he is displeased with me, and says I have done wrong, I would feel obliged if he would remove me from the command, and let some one who could better and extend the duties, take my place. As I now stand I can not tell what to do. I would not intentionally act against Mr. Stanton's wishes, and I can get no orders or advice from him.

I have another matter that I have presented so often to the Department that I am almost ashamed to mention it, that causes me a great deal of trouble. It is to know how to punish artists, pilots, engineers, etc., men who are not mustered as soldiers, and yet are in the Government service. Admiral Porter tried one case by the naval process, and found that notwith-

standing all the charges were sustained, and the man proved guilty, "yet owing to the irregularity of our organization he could not be convicted," and was therefore set free. Another case: I summoned a court-martial, and the court decided "that the man was not a commissioned, non-commissioned officer, nor private, therefore was not subject to army regulations, and further, that they could not try cases of offenses against navy regulations." I wish for you to obtain, from the Adjutant General, some advice for me upon this subject, that I may govern my action in such cases upon.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLEL,

Brigadier General.

[NOTE:—The subject of the latter part of above letter is fully treated of in the last chapter of this History.]

(Memorandum inclosed in the letter).

We arrived above Vicksburg on the 22nd of March. I immediately learned that Admiral Farragut was below Vicksburg, and in communication with Capt. Walke, who, in the absence of Porter, was commanding the gun-boats. I learned, not officially, that Farragut had made application to Porter for assistance to hold the river. I applied to Captain Walke for information, who declined to answer my communication. The second day I received a communication from Farragut, desiring to see me. I visited him on board the Hartford, three miles below Warrenton. I walked all the way, nearly eleven miles. He expressed a great desire for re-inforcement of two rams and one ironclad, and gave me his request in writing. I promised to send the rams that night. One (the first) object that Farragut had in view, was to destroy the enemy's works at Warrenton. My rams, if they got down, were to ferry troops over the river for that purpose, under the protection of the Hartford's guns. I left the Hartford about 2 o'clock and hurried back. Every arrangement was pushed as fast as was possible, to prepare the boats as well as could be, with the means at hand, and the limited time. I notified Captain Walke of the Admiral's request, and my intention to comply, and requested his co-operation, which he declined to give. The boats started; you know the result. To me it was not unexpected. I was willing to lose one boat, to get the other through to the Admiral's support. I considered his position so perilous. Upon my return to the upper fleet Porter had arrived. He wrote me an insulting letter, demanding to know by whose authority the boats were sent down and sacrificed, stating what was not true, that their loss was in consequence of the passage being attempted in broad daylight. I answered the letter with a full report, correcting the erroneous impression of the passages being made in daylight, and giving the reasons for the whole transaction.

The *Switzerland* was repaired in three days, and passed down the river, under command of Lieut. Col. Ellet, in company with Admiral Farragut. Lieut. Col. Ellet received his orders before starting from me. Admiral Porter wrote me a very sharp letter, denying my right to give orders to my subordinate officers without receiving them from him, and informed me that he had ordered the arrest of Lieut. Col. Ellet, and would try him by court-martial for disrespect, which he has not done. I made a full, detailed report of the passage of the batteries, and the loss of the *Lancaster*, and mailed it on the Admiral's flagship, *Black Hawk*, on the 28th of March. On the 13th of April I received a dispatch from the Secretary of War, informing me that no report of that transaction had been received from me, and that my reputation had suffered from misrepresentation. I at once mailed duplicate copies of my former report, with letters and correspondence, with both Admirals and Walke, connected with the transaction, to the Department, and had the package placed in the post office at Cairo, Ill., on the evening of the 13th of April. I have not heard one word from the Department, either in approval or condemnation, of the matter. I am very desirous to know how this affair of the loss of the *Lancaster* is regarded by the Department. If I have done wrong or exceeded what was my authority, I should be relieved at once from this command, and if my action has been proper, it is but fair that I should have some expression to that effect.

Yours very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

On the night of the 28th, during the heavy storm that proved very severe to all the steam boats and shipping in the vicinity, the *City of Vicksburg* which the *QUEEN* had attempted to destroy, two months before, under the guns of the river batteries, broke loose from her moorings at the wharf, and floated down stream. The few men aboard, utterly unable to handle her, abandoned her and made their escape, leaving her to fall into Admiral Farragut's hands next morning as a prize. But on sending a boarding party to examine her, it was found that her machinery had been removed. While the Admiral was as yet undecided what to do with her, the rebels sent a party down in the night (30th) and burned her.

At this time occurred the death of Lieutenant James Roberts, a nephew of Gen. Ellet, from typhoid pneumonia. He was a son of the Chief Surgeon of the fleet, and was a young man of fine qualities and great promise. He was chosen by his uncle (the senior Col. Ellet) to be his clerk and amanuensis, and later volunteered to assist

the engineers of the QUEEN on the occasion of her going down under the fire of the batteries to attack the "Arkansas." For his bravery on that, and other subsequent occasions, he had recently received a Lieutenant's commission. But the hardships and unusual strain upon his health were too great, and facilities for care and comfort of patients limited, and during a temporary absence of his father, Chief Surgeon Robarts, the brave young officer succumbed to the ravages of this disease. His remains were forwarded North, April 1, and sent for interment, to the family, at Carbondale, Ill. He was a favorite among fleet crews and soldiers, and his death saddened many hearts.



CHAPTER VI

April-June, 1863

Switzerland With the Gulf Squadron.- Sieges of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. Destruction of Rebel Queen and Other Boats on Grand Lake. Fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. The Sutherland-Ferguson Correspondence. The Question of Ram Fleet Discipline.- Prize Money Awarded the Ram Fleet.

The assignment of Col. Charles Rivers Ellet to the command of the infantry regiment of the Marine Brigade, (now enroute for the Tennessee) and the departure of the *SWITZERLAND*, under Lt. Col. John A. Ellet, to serve with Farragut below, together with the detaching of one or two other rams for special duty, at the behest of Admiral Porter, practically ended the service of the ram fleet, as a distinct command, and here its history, as such, might close. But, as the ensuing three month's operations of the *SWITZERLAND* were remote from those of the Brigade, whose history from this time forward will include the doings of the other rams, we will append the best account attainable of the service she rendered in the months intervening, until the capture of Vicksburg brought Ellet's entire command once more together.

At this time [April, 1863] Banks' army was pressing northward with Alexandria as the objective point, while Taylor was doing his best in his department on the river, with Alexandria as headquarters, to retard Banks' progress, and at the same time keep such boats as he had, in Red river and other waters, operating to prevent communication, and hinder navigation by the Federal vessels. The "Queen" and the "Webb," aided by several cotton-clad, light draft boats, loaded with sharpshooters, made quite a formidable showing.

In tracing reports and dispatches to keep in touch with our ram, we shall learn of the fate of the "Queen," whose prowess had won a world wide fame:

In a di-patch to Halleck, Gen. Banks, on March 21, said: "Gen. Weitzel informs me that the "Queen of the West" and the "Webb" "are at Butte a la Rose, on the Atchafalaya, and threatening an attack "upon his position."

General McPherson, who was well to the front of Grant's then pending movement, informs his Chief, in a dispatch dated April 1, that he has learned that the "Queen of the West" is up Red river with the "Webb" adding also, this information, which that gallant but somewhat gullible officer, must have acquired *via* the "grapevine line," much in use in those days: "The *Indianola* has been raised [by "the rebels, of course] and the guns taken off and sent to Alexandria, "and the boat taken up the Big Black, about a day before Admiral "Farragut's arrival, her hull comparatively uninjured, though her upper works were blown off by the explosion." We shall learn further on how little truth there was in this report.

On his way down Admiral Farragut sends a communication to Gen. Banks, with whom he is co operating in the movement then in progress, up the west side of the Mississippi, from which the following extract is taken. It conveys a mild criticism upon Gen. Ellet [who, as the reader has already seen, was in no wise to blame] for the delay in the start of the rams, and also repeats the remark about the frailty of the *Lancaster*. The truth of the matter was that while the *Lancaster* had an old hull, she had good engines, sat like a duck in the water, and was both manageable and fleet. She was strengthened by timbers the same as the other boats, and had she ever struck an enemy a fair blow, would have done execution equal to any other ram of her size, and it would have been the enemy and not the *Lancaster* that would have "telescoped." But with a great hole torn in her hull at the water line she rapidly filled and went down. The Admiral's closing remark will bring a smile to every survivor of the fleet who remembers the voracious demands of the *SWITZERLAND* for "more Pittsburg coal."

U. S. Steamship *Hartford*, April 6, 1863.

General A. P. Banks:

Dear Sir: Had two more of my vessels passed (Port Hudson) I would not have had to apply to Admiral Porter for additional vessels to blockade Red River. As it is I have only one ram, the *Switzerland*, and my force being so very small we are compelled to keep together, but I hope it will not be long before we hear of the upper fleet. The rashness of General Ellet, in running his rams down in open day deprived me of the use of one of them: still, even one, is better than none. * * * In order to blockade Red River, I returned here as soon as I could get my supplies and coal floated down from above, and repair damages to the *Switzerland*. The rams did not lose a man in passing the Vicksburg batteries. But the *Lancaster* was sunk, and the *Switzerland* received two shots in her boilers. The former was an old, worthless boat, of the frailest construction. My greatest difficulty is to keep the *Switzerland* in fuel.

D. G. FARRAGUT.

Banks at Brashear City, April 10, to Gen. Halleck, mentions: "Admiral [Farragut] at Bayou Sara, with *Hartford*, *Albatross* and SWITZERLAND. All well."

On the 17th of April, Banks, in a dispatch to Halleck, transmitted this welcome intelligence: "We have destroyed the "Queen of the West," and compelled him [the enemy] to destroy the gunboats "Diana" and "Hart" [Confederate cotton-clads] with supplies of subsistence and ammunition."

The deterrent effect of the rebel ram exploits, upon the military operations then in progress, opposite and below Vicksburg, is well illustrated in this clause in a dispatch from Gen. Osterhaus, at New Carthage, April 8, to 17th, A. C. Headquarters, stating as his reason for not advancing his artillery "until I had positive information "that the enemy's gunboats, "Webb" and "Queen of the West" were "not in these waters—a question, I could not get answered."

On April 21, Pemberton, at Jackson, telegraphed the authorities at Richmond: "Following just received from Gen. Gardner, Port Hudson—"It is authentic that Gen. Taylor has retreated to Vermilionville, and the advance of the enemy occupy New Iberia. "Queen of the West" and "Diana" destroyed; also reported that the "Hart" "is destroyed."

April 22, Gen. Kirby Smith reported to Pemberton: "Our boats "the "Queen of the West" and "Diana" were lost in Taylor's opera-

"tions in Grand Lake, and we are consequently without means of preventing [Federal] operations in this district."

On the 23rd of April, Banks in his dispatch to Grant, says: "The gunboats "Diana," "Hart" and "Queen of the West" have been destroyed, and their armament captured by our forces. We have among our prisoners the most important officers of all arms—Capt. E. W. Fulton, the commander of their fleet, captured from the "Queen of the West", known here as the "King of the Swamps."

A report of same date, from Taylor himself, gives additional particulars: "Having (about April 9) given orders for the gunboats "Queen of the West," "Grand Duke," and "Mary T." to rendezvous at Butte a la Rose, and with the utmost dispatch proceed down the Atchafalaya, and Grand Lake, I sent one of my staff to hurry them down."

Banks to Farragut of same date relates: "We compelled them to destroy the "Diana" and "Hart," and the fleet commanded by Lieut. Cooke, sunk the "Queen of the West" in the contest for the possession of Butte a la Rose, on Grand Lake."

In a dispatch from Banks to Grant, of May 1, he mentions the destruction of the three rebel boats again, and adds: "The "Queen" was burned but we got her guns."

Farragut to Banks, May 1, mentions: "I sent the SWITZERLAND up to Grand Gulf, to communicate with Gen. Grant and Admiral Porter."

Gen. Grover, reporting from Barre's Landing, La., to Headquarters, 19th A. C., May 2, gives additional facts: . . . "A courier was dispatched [by the enemy] to Butte a la Rose, with orders for their gunboats "Queen of the West" and others available, to move down into the lake, and attack us by water, while a small force of cavalry and artillery from New Iberia was ordered to observe our movements, and dispute our landing. These forces did not, however, have time to effect a junction, before our vanguard, under Gen. Dwight, had succeeded in taking up a strong position which perfectly covered it. Neither did their gunboats arrive until after we had cut our connection with the landing, and then only to meet with disaster, and the loss of the "Queen of the West."

Grant was now engaged in his great flank move on Vicksburg — his army already rapidly transferring to points on the river below Vicksburg, on the Louisiana side. And when the transfer had well progressed, Admiral Porter moved down by night past the batteries with most of his gunboats, and a fleet of transports, followed a night or two later by others, so that there was ample means of ferrying Grant's army across, at any desired point below. This feat was accomplished without the loss of a man from the battery fire, and but few were injured. A combined attack upon Grand Gulf by Porter's fleet and one army corps, on the 29th, proved futile, as the armament was too heavy for Porter's vessels, and he retired after five hours heavy bombardment, having sustained the severe loss of eighteen killed and fifty-six wounded. This result, witnessed by Grant in person, determined him to move further down the river, and cross below these fortified places, and the last day of April witnessed the commencement of the transfer of his troops to the Mississippi side, at Bruinsburg, about forty miles below Vicksburg—a strategic movement of vast consequence in the great campaign then in progress. For this movement Grant had little encouragement from his chief advisers, and some of his best Generals were skeptical as to its success. Gen. Sherman indeed, strongly opposed it. But Grant knew he could depend upon the courage and endurance of both officers and men, when once they were given a fighting chance—something they had never yet had in any previous movement toward Vicksburg.

As soon as Grant's army was safely across and moving on its course to the rear of Vicksburg, Porter with a number of his vessels passed on down to join Farragut, who was then co-operating with Banks in his contemplated advance upon Port Hudson, and also keeping watch on Red River. In a dispatch from this point on May 1, Farragut informs Grant that "the enemy has removed the guns of the *Indianola* from Fort De Russy, Red river—where the *QUEEN OF THE WEST* was captured from us—to Alexandria, to defend that city." The junction of Porter's vessels with his own, at the mouth of Red river, on May 3rd, is thus joyfully communicated to Gen. Banks, in a dispatch dated May 4, reading: "The ram *SWITZERLAND* returned last night, accompanied by Admiral Porter, and four iron-clads, and he will be at Alexandria before you can possibly get

there." In his history Porter says: "On the 3rd, Porter reached Red river, and after conferring with Ad. Farragut proceeded up that river with the *Benton*, *Lafayette*, *Pittsburg*, *Gen. Price*, tug *Ivy* and ram SWITZERLAND, joining the patrolling boats *Arizona* and *Estrella*. They found Fort De Russy evacuated, and its guns taken away. Next day—moved on up to Alexandria, where Banks arrived the following day. Leaving part of his fleet, the *Lafayette*, *Estrella*, *Arizona* and ram SWITZERLAND, to co-operate with Banks' army, Porter moved out of the Red river shortly afterward."

Meantime Banks, having reached Alexandria, dispatched to Halleck: "Admiral Porter arrived off the town yesterday morning with his four ironclads, the ram SWITZERLAND, and our gunboats the *Estrella* and *Arizona*."

Commodore Palmer, in absence of Farragut who had gone to New Orleans May 11, to Banks—reporting the location of the co-operating vessels of Gulf Squadron, says: "Two of them the *Arizona* and SWITZERLAND are up Red river, and the *Albatross* and *Estrella* with me."

Brig. Gen. Andrews, at Simsport, to Banks, reports: "The *Estrella* and SWITZERLAND arrived here to-day from Alexandria, which they left at 12 m., May 17."

Banks' army was now moving eastward, according to a plan he had communicated to Grant, asking his co-operation with Port Hudson, as the objective point. But the former was well advanced in his own far more important movement, and could not be diverted from it. As rapidly as possible Banks pressed east to the Mississippi, and his army was ferried to the east side, at Bayou Sara, and thence moved down, effecting a junction with Gen. Augur's forces, which had been ordered up from below, and environed and began the attack upon Port Hudson. After one or two severe assaults, in which heavy losses were sustained, and no substantial progress made at the reduction or capture of the fortifications, though some of the water batteries were temporarily silenced by the guns of Farragut's vessels, the attack settled down to a regular siege, like that following the second assault on Vicksburg a week before. This was the situation at the end of May.

Fortunately the detailed report, by Lt. Col. John A. Ellet, of the SWITZERLAND'S operations, up to its date (May 20) has been preserved. It is of great historic interest and value, and is here given in full:

U. S. Steam Ram Switzerland,
Mouth Red River, Louisiana, May 20th, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, Com'dy Marine Brigade:

General: In accordance with your instructions, dated March 28th, I took command of this vessel. The injuries received in the passage of the Vicksburg batteries being fully repaired, I passed the batteries at Warrenton on the morning of March 31st, before daylight. To my great surprise the enemy fired but one gun, probably owing to the severe bombardment of the batteries by Admiral Farragut, on the day previous. Below Warrenton, I joined Admiral Farragut with his two vessels, the Hartford and Albatross, and we proceeded down the river in company. We stopped below New Carthage until after night fall, that we might have the advantage of the darkness in passing the batteries at Grand Gulf. At 8 o'clock, we started past the batteries, the Switzerland in the advance. We were exposed to a very hot fire for about fifteen minutes, to which we vigorously replied. My vessel was twice struck, but no one was injured, and but trifling damage was done to the boat. We then proceeded to the mouth of Red River, the blockade of which we have maintained ever since. All yawls and flatboats in our course were destroyed, to prevent the crossing of troops or supplies. I have three times been down the river as far as Port Hudson, to communicate across the peninsula with Admiral Farragut's fleet below. The point was strongly guarded by the enemy, but by shelling the woods, and then sending out a strong party as an escort, the messenger was each time enabled to reach his destination in safety. On our last trip sharp skirmishing with the enemy's pickets ensued, in which we took two prisoners and wounded others. No casualties on our side. We captured a signal station, containing fifteen pairs of blankets, a quantity of clothing, small arms, provisions, torches, rockets, etc. At Bayou Sara we destroyed thirty hogsheads of sugar, five hundred sacks of corn, corn meal and hominy, together with one hundred bushels of sweet potatoes, intended for the rebel army at Port Hudson. On the 1st of May, I was dispatched to Grand Gulf, Miss., by Admiral Farragut, to communicate with Admiral Porter, whom we learned was lying with his gun-boats above that point, to obtain of him some ironclad vessels to co-operate with Gen. Banks, who was marching on Alexandria. I was gratified to find that Grand Gulf was ours, and that Admiral Porter was below that point. Admiral Porter immediately determined to go up Red River, with three ironclads, the wooden gun boat, Gen. Price, and the ram Switzerland. Arriving at the mouth of Red River our fleet was joined by the Estrella and Arizona, two small schooner-rigged, wooden gun-boats, belonging to Admiral Farragut's fleet these having arrived from

Berwick's Bay, through the Atchafalaya River, during my absence. The seven vessels then started up Red River, the Switzerland leading the van. We encountered no obstructions until we reached Fort De Russey (Gordon's Landing). The fort was evacuated, but the enemy had placed a large raft across the river, which was easily removed. The casements of the fort were entirely destroyed, and Government property (Confederate) burned. We then proceeded to Alexandria, which place was also evacuated. Admiral Porter took possession at 9 o'clock a. m., and General Banks arrived at 6 o'clock p. m. The rebel forces, under Generals Taylor and Sibley, retreated up the river to Shreveport, taking with them all their gun-boats and transports. As it was reported that there was but eight feet of water on the falls, Admiral Porter did not think it prudent for the fleet to pursue them. He therefore on the following morning, sent an expedition up the Black and Washita rivers. It consisted of the ironclad gun-boat Pittsburg, the wooden boats Arizona and Price, and the ram Switzerland. We ascended the Black River to the town of Trinity, at which point Black River is formed by the confluence of Washita, Texas and Little Rivers. Here we destroyed a large amount of stores intended for the rebel army, consisting of sugar, molasses, salt, saltpetre, tobacco, bacon, etc. We then proceeded up the Washita to a place called Harrisonburg, eighty miles from the mouth of Black River and fifteen from Trinity. Here we met with a serious obstruction, in the shape of a strong rebel fortification, called "Fort Beauregard." The Pittsburg, Arizona and Gen. Price bombarded the fort for three hours, with their long range guns, but as my small battery would not reach the fortifications, I was obliged to amuse myself by shelling the woods on either side of the river, to repel sharpshooters, secreted along the bank to fire upon our gunners. The enemy had no heavy guns in position. Their battery consisted of one 42, two 32's and a battery of twelve small field pieces, but these were so thoroughly protected by their heavy earth works, that our guns made no impression on them. It was therefore thought best to inform Admiral Porter of the condition of affairs, that he might send up the other two ironclads, to assist in the reduction of the fort. The Switzerland was dispatched to Alexandria for that purpose. I met Admiral Porter in the Benton, on Red River, just below Fort de Russey, and delivered my message and dispatches. He sent me back to order all the boats down to the mouth of Red River forthwith. I did so. Arriving at the mouth of Black River, I received an order from him to proceed to Alexandria, to co-operate with the army. But two brigades remained at that point, under Gen. Weitzel, the rest having returned to Simsport on the Atchafalaya. A body of Texas cavalry, about one thousand strong, had become troublesome to Gen. Weitzel's outposts. They were encamped on Bayou Rapides, twenty miles above Alexandria, and had a battery of field pieces, protected by a cotton bale fortification, at the junction of Bayou Rapides with Red River. Gen. Weitzel wanted to capture them. His plan was to send a boat up the river to shell the battery, and carrying a sufficient number of men

to make a landing and hold the bridge across Bayou Rapides, while a cavalry force cut off their retreat in every other direction. He asked the co-operation of my vessel, and complying with the request, 300 soldiers were immediately sent on board. We started up the river at 8 a. m., moving very slowly and cautiously over the falls, and sounding as we went. We passed over without difficulty and the shallowest cast of the lead that we obtained was *nine* feet. We had no Red River pilot and of course were compelled to guess at the channel. The graduated scale upon the wharf at Alexandria designed to show the depth of water on the falls, gave thirteen feet, and I have no doubt we would have found that amount had we known the channel. This was eight days after our arrival at Alexandria, and the river had been constantly falling. The expedition upon which we were dispatched was not successful—the enemy seeing the ram coming up the river abandoned their cotton-bale fortifications, and escaped before the infantry could land to cut off their retreat. Two days after, to-wit, on the 17th day of May, the remainder of Bank's army left Alexandria, and is now on the road to Simsport. I covered their rear, as long as the road followed the bank of the river, to keep them from being annoyed by the enemy's cavalry, and then proceeded to the mouth of Red River, where I am now lying, cleaning out our boilers, and attending to some trifling repairs. So constantly has my vessel been employed, that I have not been allowed to clean out my boilers before, since I passed Vicksburg. I had only ten days' coal when I started, though nearly two months have elapsed. I have been able to sustain myself by burning the enemy's wood. I had but thirty days' rations, but by foraging extensively, I have managed to keep my command in a healthy condition. But two deaths have occurred during the time. A negro, name unknown, fell overboard on Red River, and was drowned. Richard T. Allis, Co. G, 101st Ills. Vols., was crushed to death by the pitman of the starboard engine, May 13th, while working at the water pump. The sanitary condition of the command is excellent, as you will observe by reference to the consolidated report, herewith transmitted.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. ELLET.

Lt. Col. Com'dg Ram Fleet, M. M. Brigade.

A report of Capt. Walke to Commander Palmer, a few days later, gives knowledge of further operations of the *SWITZERLAND*, and the movements of the enemy, as follows:

U. S. Gun-boat *Lafayette*, Red River, June 3, 1863.

J. S. Palmer, Com'dg Flagship Hartford:

Sir: This morning I sent the *Switzerland* down to Simsport to make a reconnoissance, in compliance with your request of the 30th ult., and about three-quarters of an hour after I heard a brisk firing in that vicinity, when I dispatched the *Pittsburg* immediately for that place, but before she reached

the Atchafalaya the Switzerland met the Pittsburg and giving information of her engagement with two batteries of light guns, and a considerable force of infantry, they both returned. Col. (John A.) Ellet reports that four or five pieces of light artillery opened fire on him, with about a regiment of infantry, wounding three of his men, one dangerously. The Switzerland returned the fire, passing below the batteries, and also on her return, but not having the means of capturing the enemy or his guns, and his steam pipe disabled, he returned. I have sent him to you for some troops, if they can be obtained, so that I can make an attack upon the enemy and capture his artillery and some of his troops, perhaps by landing our troops immediately after driving them from their guns. Col. Ellet will report particulars. In great haste.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. WALKER,
Captain U. S. N.

A message from Commodore Palmer to Banks, dated June 4, indicates the presence and usual readiness of the ram SWITZERLAND for any service required. The commodore says: "I sent Col. [John A.] Ellet up to you yesterday, and informed you that Simsport was in possession of the enemy, and the banks of the Atchafalaya filled with their sharpshooters. This I presume he did, and told you how heavy the fire was."

No further record of the SWITZERLAND's operations appears till she joined the fleet at Vicksburg, after the surrender. Her soldiers, mostly Co. G, 101st Ill., were soon after sent North as guard for prisoners, and at St. Louis, many of them were granted furloughs. At that time Master John S. S. Hewes succeeded Master McNally, in charge of the boat, and so remained during the rest of the time the SWITZERLAND was retained in the service.

Subsequent operations of the rams will be mentioned, at the dates of their occurrence, in the pages of the Brigade history.

THE SUTHERLAND-FERGUSON CORRESPONDENCE.—A REVELATION OF THE WAR RECORDS.

Mention has heretofore been made of the marriage, some months previous, of Capt. E. W. Sutherland, then of the QUEEN OF THE WEST, to a somewhat widely known southern woman, residing at Skipwith Landing, known as the Widow Harris. Such an alliance (for the widow was a noted rebel) boded no good for the Captain, though he

was regarded as an officer of undoubted loyalty, and accounted brave and trustworthy in every emergency. When the QUEEN was about to undertake the running of the batteries, and operations below, in the selection of a crew, it was decided that Capt. Sutherland should be assigned to the MOXARCH for scouting duty up the river, where the rebels were constantly attacking passing boats, and that Capt. Asgill Connor should go with Col. Ellet, on the QUEEN.

During the ensuing month or more the MOXARCH and SWITZERLAND, Capt. Sutherland in command, had been employed, under Admiral Porter's immediate direction, on patrol duty, as far up as Greenville. It was during this time that Porter's famous Anti-Guerrilla order was issued, and vigorous efforts made to stop the firing upon unarmed transports by the enemy, and also to collect cotton, wherever found, reporting direct to the Admiral, according to his instructions, dated February 13. It was at this date that the Admiral, in a communication to Sutherland directed that he—"if possible get those field pieces that are firing on our vessels" and added in closing: "If you catch any of the party who fire on unarmed vessels hang them to the nearest tree." In a later letter of instructions (February 21) the Admiral cautions Sutherland repeatedly, to read over and fully understand, and follow explicitly, his Order concerning guerrilla attacks on transports, pillaging, and outrages by whomsoever committed. Allusion is made to a recent attack upon the [Ram] FULROX, as an exception—she being a war vessel. The object of said Order, and his instructions to his officers is declared to be, "to prevent firing on unarmed boats, and protecting planters along the river, in their persons and property." The course of his action, under these Orders and instructions, will appear later.

It was known that a Confederate officer had been sent out by Pemberton, to plan and conduct these raids, by means of small bands of mounted men with one, two or three pieces of field artillery. At this period this branch of Confederate "service" on the river, from Vicksburg north, was in charge of a Lieut. Col. Ferguson, and a convenient base for his operations was in the vicinity of Greenville. The Admiral kept the MOXARCH or SWITZERLAND, and sometimes both, occupied in that vicinity, to check and repel these raids. During most of February, they were so employed, while the QUEEN was making

history in the waters below Vicksburg. While engaged in this scouting service, Capt. Sutherland, on one or more occasions communicated under flag of truce, with Col. Ferguson, and at least once held a conference with him. No satisfactory explanation of this correspondence was ever given, though it was generally understood to be in regard to the carrying out of Admiral Porter's "retaliation" order.

The publication, in recent years, of the official correspondence (Union and Confederate) of the War period, furnishes a chapter of interest to those following the events of this history. We shall here give the correspondence referred to in the order of its dates, without comment of our own, as to either its veracity, or its importance:

Mississippi Marine Ram Fleet, off Greenville, Feb. 14, 1863.

To Officer Commanding U. S. Forces near Greenville:

Sir:- I desire an interview with you on business connected with the service. If you will do me the honor to meet me, I will indicate the Court House at Greenville as a proper place where I will be with a flag of truce to-morrow (Sunday, 15th inst.) at 2 p. m.

I am very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN W. SUTHERLAND.

U. S. Navy Captain Commanding First Division Ram Flotilla.

[*Confidential.*]

Near Greenville, Washington Co., Feb. 15th, 1863.

Major J. J. Reeves, Assistant Adjutant General:

I have the honor to report that I have just returned from an interview at Greenville with Capt. E. W. Sutherland, U. S. Navy, held under flag of truce at his request. The ostensible object was to furnish me with a copy of his instructions (which please find enclosed) and to ask if I could not devise some means by which he should be spared the pain and mortification of having to perpetrate such barbarities, which he condemned in the strongest terms. I answered that I should obstruct the navigation of the Mississippi in every possible manner, communicate his instructions to my government, and while waiting instructions, retaliate as best I might. He also stated that he had orders to cut the levees at different points, and to burn all houses in the vicinity of places where boats were fired upon. So much for his official business. The real object of his interview, I have no doubt, is, to find out whether, if he resigns from the Federal Navy, he can secure any position in our service, and even said: "Should I, by what influence I possess, be allowed to resign I would not like to remain inactive during the war." He is the individual who married the Widow Harris, of Skipwith Landing, and I judge from all that transpired, may be won to our side. Taking into consideration the monetary

interests at stake in the South, and the probable influence of his wife, whom he tells me is most intensely true to the South, etc., I think it not impossible to gain him and his vessel, and would respectfully suggest that the trial be made. Could such a gun-boat be secured the supplies for the Abolition Army at Vicksburg could be cut off entirely, and numbers of boats destroyed, before they discovered it. I have written in great haste, and perhaps not as fully as the subject warrants. Captain S. informed me he was already strongly suspected by his Government, and expressed great uneasiness at what might be thought of his having sought this interview with me today saying he would put it on the ground of arrangements about that hospital at Greenville. The subject merits attention, and is respectfully submitted with a request for instructions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON,

Lieut. Colonel Commanding Detachment.

Headquarters Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana,

Jackson, Miss., February 20, 1863.

Lieut. Colonel S. W. Ferguson:

Sir:—A few days since, instructions were sent you in case you find that your position on the river could not be maintained, you should return. The same are now reiterated. I leave it to your judgment to determine the advisability of remaining or returning, inasmuch as no further supporting force can now be sent you. Admiral Porter's notice, threatening to treat as highwaymen and assassins, persons who may be found interrupting the navigation of the Mississippi River, and giving no quarter to any person found burning cotton or carrying contributions to the inhabitants along the river, has been forwarded by General Stevenson to me. You are authorized to say to Captain Sutherland, or any other Federal officers, that if this threat is carried out, retaliation in the fullest measure will be visited on the heads of such Federal officers and prisoners as I have, or may hereafter fall into my hands. I shall direct General Stevenson to notify Admiral Porter that any attempt to carry into effect this notice, will be retaliated in the same manner upon such prisoners as I now have or may hereafter fall into my hands.

I am very respectfully,

J. C. PEMBERTON,

Lieut. Gen. Com'dg.

Headquarters Dept. of Mississippi and East Louisiana,

Jackson, Miss., February 21, 1863.

Lieut. Colonel S. W. Ferguson:

Your communication marked "confidential" has been forwarded to me, and in reply you can say to the person referred to, that should he render the service, I shall have no hesitation in placing his conduct in such a light before the Government as will, I am confident, secure for him a proper acknowledge-

ment. If, after mature consideration you shall think there is a strong probability of a successful result, I shall as soon as possible send a proper person to take charge, and any additional assistance you may require inasmuch as it might prove embarrassing for him to continue in his present position. Having great confidence in your judgment and discretion, with these general views, I shall leave the whole subject in your hands. The service that could be rendered is so important and desirable, that, if successful, there can be no division of sentiment and feeling.

I am very respectfully,

J. C. PEMBERTON.

Lieutenant General Commanding.

February 22, 1863.

Major Reeces, Assistant Adjutant General:

I have to report that I am here with a small party, waiting to communicate by flag of truce with the ram *Monarch*, instructions of the 20th inst. direct from Lieut. General Pemberton. My future movements will depend in a great measure on the results of the desired interview. * * * [in a subsequent dispatch] "I have sent a flag of truce to communicate with Captain E. W. Sutherland and will report more fully at the earliest moment."

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON.

Lieut. Colonel Commanding C. S. Forces.

Headquarters Second District Dept. of Mississippi and East Louisiana.

Vicksburg, Miss., Feb. 24, 1863.

Major General U. S. Grant, Commanding U. S. Forces Front of Vicksburg:

General: I am instructed by the Lieut. General Commanding this Department to transmit to you the inclosed copy of a notice purporting to have been issued by Admiral David D. Porter, U. S. Navy. I request that you will inform me whether this document is authentic and if it be, whether the operations of any of the forces under you are to be conducted in accordance with the principles announced by Admiral Porter, or those of civilized warfare. While the troops of this Confederacy whom I have the honor to command will actively repel the invasion of our territory by the forces of the United States, it is my desire that their operations shall be in accordance with the usages of war of humanity and civilization. I shall deplore the necessity of any departure from them. Therefore, I hope this notice of Admiral Porter is not authentic, or, that it will be reconsidered, and that in no case will its threats be executed, because I am instructed to say if they are, the fullest retaliation will be inflicted upon the Federal prisoners in our hands, or whom we may capture, and no quarter will be given to any officer, soldier or citizen of the United States, taken in the act of burning houses, laying waste the plantations, or otherwise wantonly destroying the property of the citizens of this

Confederacy: and that all such persons suspected of having been guilty of such acts, will not, if taken, be treated as prisoners of war, but will be kept in close confinement. Relying upon your disposition to co-operate with me in averting the necessity for a resort to such measures,

I am, General, respectfully your obedient servant,

C. L. STEVENSON,
Maj. Gen. Com'dg.

[*Inclosure.*]

NOTICE.

Persons taken in the act of firing on unarmed vessels from the banks will be treated as highwaymen and assassins and no quarter will be shown them. Persons strongly suspected of firing on unarmed vessels will not receive the usual treatment of prisoners of war but will be kept in close confinement. If this savage and barbarous Confederate policy can not be put a stop to we will try what virtue there is in hanging. All persons no matter who they are, who are caught in the act of pillaging the houses of inhabitants along the river, levying contributions, or burning cotton, will receive no quarter if caught in the act or if it is proved upon them.

By order of

DAVID D. PORTER,
Acting Rear Admiral.

EDWIN W. SUTHERLAND,

Captain Commanding Ram Monarch.

Headquarters C. S. Forces, Feb. 25, 1863.
In Washington Co., Miss.

To Captain E. W. Sutherland, U. S. Navy, Commanding Ram Monarch: -

Sir: I desire to communicate with you officially in reference to the recent notice of Admiral Porter, communicated to me by you. Should you agree to honor me with an interview, I will meet you with a flag of truce at such proper time and place as you may designate.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON,
Lieut. Colonel Commanding C. S. Forces.

Deer Creek, Near Falls Landing, March 3, 1863.

Lt. Gen. J. C. Pemberton: -

General: Your favors of 20th and 21st ult. were received on the evening of the 25th. I at once dispatched a flag of truce to communicate your instructions, but up to last night, when I left the river, no gun-boats had been about their usual station. If he has not been arrested, as I fear may be the case, I have no doubt of success in the project I explained in my confidential letter. During the recent raid of the Yankees, my wife was detained on the boat for two days, and on her return brought messages of the strongest im-

port, such as: "If his resignation was not accepted within a week, the crisis would come, and he would turn on them and sink everything in the river." He shelled the troops who were plundering, within range of his guns, from the quarters of several of the plantations, and the Abolitionists all curse him very bitterly, and swear to be avenged.

If I can succeed in communicating from these and other indications my plan seems feasible. It is certainly worth an earnest trial, and, for this reason I have been keeping near the river, with the artillery well back. From the recent rain-floods, I could with difficulty get the guns to the banks for some days. I am, General,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON,

Lt. Col. Com'dg.

Headquarters U. S. Forces, Washington Co., Miss., March 8, 1863.

To the Officer in Command of U. S. Forces near Greenville:

Sir: I have been informed that two men of my command, left by my orders at Greenville, Mississippi, with a flag of truce for the purpose of delivering a letter addressed to Captain Sutherland, U. S. Navy, on official business, were taken off from that point on the 6th inst. by the forces of the United States. In consequence of this I sent an officer under flag of truce to Greenville to deliver this letter. If my information proves correct I would request to be informed on what grounds, and by whose authority this violation, as I must consider it, of the right and usages of war, has been committed? I am the more urged to make this request as the same men were, a day or two before, taken, disarmed and carried on board the U. S. vessel Curlew, where their dispatch was opened and read. With the hope that this matter may at once receive the attention of the United States authority, I am, sir,

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON,

Lieut. Colonel Commanding.

Camp on Deer Creek, Washington County, March 13, 1863.

Major J. J. Reeves, U. S. A.:

Major: I have the honor to make the following report: On the 15th of February, I received by the hand of a citizen, a letter from Capt. E. W. Sutherland, U. S. Navy, a copy of which is herewith forwarded. The department was at once informed of the result of that interview, and furnished with the notice of Admiral Porter, then communicated by Captain Sutherland, who expressed his willingness to communicate at any time that should be necessary by flag of truce. On the 25th of same month I received instructions from Lieut. General Pemberton, which I was ordered to communicate to Captain Sutherland, or any other Federal officer. I, at once, sent by flag of truce, a letter, a copy of which is herewith forwarded [no copy extant]. After keep-

ing the party with the flag of truce at Greenville for several days, in further effort to communicate, the ravages of the Abolitionists on Lake Washington, compelled me to withdraw the party, except a sergeant and one man, whom I left at Greenville, with the flag and letter. I accidentally learned from a citizen that on, or about the 4th inst., the gun-boat, the *Curlew*, landed a party, who met the flag of truce, disarmed the bearers, and took them on board, where they were rudely treated and their dispatch broken open and read. It was then returned to them with the remark that Captain Sutherland should be informed the letter was for him. About the time this news reached me, and before I could communicate with the sergeant referred to, I heard from a citizen that a gun-boat had landed and taken off two men. I at once dispatched another party with a flag of truce and letter, a copy of which please find inclosed [not found] as well as a copy of the answer I received to it. I can not learn by what boat they were taken, and have not received an answer from Admiral Porter. Their horses and equipments I found at Greenville. Since the receipt of Captain [J. N.] Prickett's letter, I have posted a picket at, or near Greenville, but from the 23rd to that time, I had no troops nearer than twenty miles, except the party with the flag, and I need not add that the assertion of Captain Prickett, in regard to the flags of truce, is utterly false, and that none but those mentioned herein have been sent or been seen there.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. FERGUSON,
Lieut. Col. Commanding.

Referring to previous pages for the date of the arrival of Col. C. R. Ellet at Greenville, to take the *SWITZERLAND* and *MONARCH* to Admiral Porter above Vicksburg, and the explanation of the sudden interruption of the communications is apparent. Sutherland will later be found serving with the M. M. B. a short time, and then on sick leave, later a paroled prisoner, in wife's care, and finally resigning. No inquiry was ever made into the above matter, as no facts of sufficient importance were known, and Captain Sutherland's energetic and honorable record goes against the implications of this lately developed evidence. It is not the province of our History to exonerate or condemn.

[*Note*.—In a foot-note, at page 626, Series xxix Pt. 3, *Rebellion Records*, the editor correctly states that Capt. Sutherland was not an officer of the Navy, but erroneously adds that he was simply employed by the Q. M. Dept. as an officer of the ram fleet—the fact being that he was a duly commissioned infantry captain in the ram fleet service.]

DIFFICULTIES OF DISCIPLINE AMONG RAM FLEET CREWS.

This was, from the start, a subject of great perplexity to the successive Commanders of the Ram Fleet. At the very first attempt to plan an attack upon the enemy at Fort Pillow, Col. Charles Ellet, the Commander, encountered a reluctance and opposition, on the part of several boat's officers, which gave him much uneasiness for the success of his enterprise. His own unflinching bravery, his firmness and his tact in getting men to volunteer, soon demonstrated to his crews the feasibility of his plan of warfare, and showed them that its real perils were far less than imagined, and infused a spirit of courage and emulation in daring deeds, which finally became the characterizing feature of the ram fleet service.

But occasions for discipline continued to occur, and in the latter part of that service they became a most perplexing and burdensome feature of its management. The first case the records disclose is that of W. G. Curtis, an engineer of the QUEEN OF THE WEST, who was charged with mutinous conduct, and language unbecoming an officer in the service. According to his own representation of the matter he outranked the military officer commanding the boat. Lt. Col. Ellet requested Gen. Williams, then Commanding opposite Vicksburg (July '62) to appoint a Court Martial. No record is found of a trial, but later Curtis was heard of through attorneys in Cincinnati, having been released by the Provost Martial on his own authority, and now desiring a proper discharge in order to draw his pay. The Ram Fleet commander made a caustic characteristic reply, refusing the request. The next in the order of date was that of Joe M. Davis, Pilot of the QUEEN, for deserting his post on the morning of July 15, just before the boat started with the patrol up the Yazoo. A similar charge was entered at the same time, for a like offence, against Alex. C. Smith, Pilot of the SWITZERLAND. All three men were sent under arrest, to Gen. Sherman at Memphis, as directed by Gen. Halleck, to whom, as we have seen the question of discipline in these cases had been referred. In August following, for some offence, of which no record is found, Lieut. J. H. Johnson (one of the three Lieutenants in the original detail from the 59th Ill. Vols.) being in arrest, and at Overton Hospital, Memphis, made a written appeal to Lt. Col. A. W.

Ellet for leniency, to which that officer at once responded by withdrawing the charge against him, and ordering him to report for duty to his former command. In the latter part of August the case of Lieut. W. B. Russell, of the 63d Ill. Vols., commanding on LANCASTER, July 15, of whose incompetence and cowardice it was alleged he gave evidence that day, was disposed of by his being returned to his former command. The only case of the kind occurring in the fleet was the desertion of R. S. Grooms, who had been transferred from the Army to the fleet, and became an engineer on the SWITZERLAND. An order (October 5, 1862) for his arrest at Louisville on the charge of desertion, is the last shown of him by the record. October 6, Lt. Col. Ellet at Mound City, Ill., signifies to Brig. Gen. Tuttle that the witnesses are now available in the case of John B. Cook, left a prisoner in the hands of the Provost, on the order of Gen. Tuttle, some time before, and the order for trial was requested. No other facts shown by records. At the mouth of the Yazoo, January 25, '63, Acting 1st Master J. A. Comstock, of the LANCASTER, under arrest for some dereliction of duty not stated, was restored to duty by Lieut. Phil. F. Howell, with the understanding that he shall resign at once. On February 1, on the QUEEN, then prepared for running the batteries, Josiah V. Reeder, her pilot, flatly refused to perform his duty, and openly defied the Commander's authority to compel him to go. He was placed in arrest, and later tried and convicted of insubordination and mutiny, in the face of the enemy, by a Naval Court of Inquiry, appointed by Admiral Porter. The findings, and decision thereon, with the subsequent correspondence, and opinion of the head of the Law Department of the government at Washington, are here given in full because of their historic interest:

Mouth of Yazoo River, March 29, 1863.

In the case of Josiah V. Reeder, pilot on board the ram Queen of the West, on whom a Court of Inquiry was held, for refusing to perform the duty for which it was supposed he enlisted, the charges were all sustained, but the court find: (1). That the accused was discharged by Colonel Charles R. Ellet after the offense was committed - Colonel Ellet taking no steps in the matter, except to complain to the Admiral. (2.) It appears that the accused received assurances from General Ellet, at Mound City, Ill., that the accused would not be required to run heavy batteries, if he shipped in the Ram Fleet. (3). That as shown by the evidence of G. W. Lindsay, Second Master in the

Ram Fleet, pilots, engineers, firemen, and men on board the Ram Fleet, do not consider themselves as belonging to either army or navy. (4.) That there is an ignorance existing as to what laws and regulations they are subject to. (5.) That some have been allowed to disobey orders and others have been punished for it. (6.) That the discipline of the Ram Fleet was not very good. (7.) That pilots, engineers, and boatmen in the Ram Fleet are subject to the orders of the Colonel commanding the Ram Fleet. (8.) That all officers and men have to obey orders emanating from their superior officers. (9.) That Colonel Charles R. Ellet did, on 1st February, 1863, give to three of his engineers the privilege of going on the Queen of the West, past the Vicksburg batteries and they went. (10.) That a discharge from a ram is the order from the commanding officer to the paymaster to pay the person the money due him. In consideration of the imperfect understanding had, with the immediate commanders of the Ram Fleet and (the) apparent irregular manner of doing things on those vessels, the accused is hereby released from any further proceedings, and is at liberty to go when he pleases.

DAVID D. PORTER.

Admiral U. S. N.

It will be noticed that this was during the period of the "strained relations" between the Admiral and the General, which may have had its influence upon the decision quoted.

Headquarters Mississippi Marine Brigade.

Flagship Autoerat, Above Vicksburg, March 31, 1863.

Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas:-

Sir: I have the honor herein to enclose the proceedings of a Court of Inquiry held by order of Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter in the case of Josiah Reeder, pilot on steamer ram Queen of the West, who refused to obey his officer, Colonel Charles R. Ellet, to run said boat past the Vicksburg batteries in face of the enemy, on the 1st day of February, last. Also the findings of the General Court Martial convened by my order for the trial of one Thos. W. Garvey, pilot, for a like offense and others. In the first case the court find that the charges are all sustained, "yet, in consideration of the imperfect understanding with the immediate commanders of the Ram Fleet, and the apparent irregular manner of doing things on those vessels the accused is hereby released from any further proceedings and is at liberty to go where he pleases." In the other case the court find "That it has no right to take cognizance in the matter the prisoner being in its option (opinion) neither officer, non-commissioned officer, nor private, and therefore not subject to the consequences of a violation of the articles of war, and that it has no authority over offenses against Navy Regulations. Under these embarrassing circumstances, I would most respectfully ask to be instructed by special order, how

to proceed against offending parties belonging to this class, as it is absolutely necessary for the good of the service that justice be dealt in some way to such offenders.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brig. Gen. Com'dg M. M. Brigade,

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Washington, D. C., June 11, 1863.

Respectfully returned to the Secretary of War. The question raised by the within paper is: How shall pilots, engineers, etc., of the Ram Fleet be prosecuted and punished for offenses committed, while on duty. In the first place it is to be remarked that the force under Colonel Ellet, on duty in the Ram Fleet, is understood to be a special contingent and portion of the Army, and not of the Navy of the United States. Persons therefore employed upon these rams are to be punished, if at all, under the law which governs the discipline of the Army. These pilots, etc., are neither officers nor enlisted men and can not, therefore, be tried under those articles, which concern only officers and soldiers. By a special article, however (Article 60) these persons, specified as "All persons whatsoever serving with the armies of the United States in the field, though not enlisted soldiers," are "made subject to orders, according to the rules and discipline of war." De Hart (page 25) in commenting upon the phrase "Persons serving with the armies," holds that it includes "those that serve in the army by engagement for public hire or pay," and this is precisely the case of the pilots, engineers, etc., on the rams, who are hired by the commanding officer of the fleet, to perform the duties of their profession, for a certain period, receive as a final discharge, an order from that officer upon the paymaster for their pay. Article 60 was the result of a "necessity" felt among armies in the field, (see De Hart, page 23, and Benet, page 29), and is especially applicable to the present case. The persons in question, therefore, should be tried by court martial, under this article.

J. HOLT,

Judge Advocate General.

As we have given the opinion of the Judge Advocate General, the law officer of the Government, in these matters, it may be well to copy the form of oath taken by every boatman of the fleet, of whatever grade, as preliminary to his entering the service. It was as follows:

MILITARY OBLIGATION.

I, David L. Southwick, *Do Solemnly Swear*, That I will bear true allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whatsoever, and observe

and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the rules and articles for the government of the forces of the United States, and all Government business entrusted to me shall be strictly and sacredly confidential, and I will use my influence to have good discipline in the service to which I belong, and continue well and truly to serve until I am discharged, provided the term of service shall not exceed six months from the date hereof. So HELP ME GOD.

his

(Signed).

DAVID L. (X) SOUTHWICK,
mark

Dated and subscribed at Cairo, Ill., May 16th, 1862.

It is but just to say that, while offenders (among boats, officers or crews) sometimes offered the plea that they were not regularly in the service, and so not amenable to military law, such was not the position of the most of these men, who regarded themselves bound for the period of their enlistment, and performed their duties with equal fidelity and bravery, as the officers and soldiers serving with them. In this connection is given the decision of another branch of the government upon the same question (the relation of the crews of the rams to the service) upon an inquiry made April 9, 1863, first of Gen. Grant, and then of the Commander of the Mississippi Squadron, as to the propriety of an issue of clothing, to some of the (exchanged) prisoners then at Benton Barracks, who had been captured from the QUEEN:

OFFICE COMMISSARY GENERAL OF PRISONERS.

Washington, D. C., May 23, 1863.

Col. B. L. E. Bonnerille, Commanding Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Mo.:—

Colonel: Your letter of the 6th inst. was received and in reply I have to say that the issue of clothing to the crew of the Queen of the West was very proper. These men belong to Ellet's brigade, though not soldiers, and it is proper that an account of the issues made to them should be sent with them, when they join their command.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.

W. HOFFMAN.

Col. 3d. Inf. Com. Gen. of Prisoners.

Only one other case of interest remains to be mentioned—that of Pilot Garvey, who ran the QUEEN aground under the guns of Fort De Russy, on Red river, and caused the loss of the vessel, and capture of part of the crew, the rest (Garvey included) making their

escape on cotton bales. There had been some friction between the commander and this officer, before the event, and perhaps some cause for distrusting his fidelity, but though held long in arrest, charged with a treasonable act, no evidence was ever adduced to sustain the charge, and it was finally allowed to drop, and the accused officer went free.

From the foregoing it will be seen that in the ram fleet service several distinct causes conspired to render fruitless—nearly all attempts at punitive discipline. Chief among these were the inexperience of its Commanders in military procedure, the uncertain, or at least not well defined, relation of the boats crew to the service, and the scattered, and constantly changing relations of both officers and crews. Practically, the force of whatever discipline was attempted, was found alone in the inconvenience and disgrace attached to a period of arrest.

PRIZE MONEY IN THE RAM FLEET SERVICE.

It was the idea of the originator of the Ram Fleet that an incentive to faithful service in it, should be held out, to attract courageous men, and incite them to deeds of bravery. He urged this upon the War Secretary, but there were obstacles in the way, and nothing definite could be promised, further than "favorable mention." And, although the law governing the award of prize money in the Navy, was well understood, it was not applicable to the Ram Fleet, and not until Congress had transferred the Mississippi Flotilla (except the Rams) to the Navy, was any attempt made to award prize money for the captures it had effected. Through various influences, largely that of the historic sacrifice of the Ram Fleet Commander's own life, at Memphis, the Naval authorities, conducting the first awards, took knowledge of the conspicuous part taken in the battle before Memphis, by rams QUEEN and MONARCH, and placed their officers, crews, and even the soldiers serving on them, in that battle, on the prize list, and they were awarded shares. The crews only, of the other rams, received distributive shares in the capture or destruction awards, then, or subsequently made. These awards may be summarized as follows:

RAMS AND THEIR AWARDS.

All rams shared in capture of Bragg and Sumpter at Memphis.

Lioness, Sampson and Switzerland also in capture of Fairplay at Milliken's.

Queen and Monarch, also in capture or destruction of other vessels at Memphis and elsewhere.

None of the military officers or soldiers (with the above exceptions) ever received any reward or recognition for their service under the many calls for daring and heroism. As the story of this service now concludes, it shall be with an ascription of highest honors to the never to be forgotten Sharpshooters of the Mississippi River Ram Fleet, on whose marksmanship and bravery, the success of every ram in action, was so largely dependent.

Part II

History of the Marine Brigade.



**Brig. Gen. Alfred W. Ellet, Commander of the Mississippi Marine
Brigade.**

Sketch of General Ellet.

Alfred Wasbington Ellet was born October 11th, 1820, on his father's farm in Bucks County, Pa., on the banks of the Delaware, nearly opposite Burlington, N. J. He was the youngest of six sons, and next the youngest of fourteen children. As a youth, it is said, he was inclined to be self-willed, but was always truthful, and in his impulses generous and kind. In 1824 his father's family removed to Philadelphia, where Alfred entered the city schools. Meantime he grew rapidly, until at about the age of sixteen, because of failing health, he was compelled to forego further educational advantages, and by advice of the family physician, went to Illinois, and engaged in farming near Bunker Hill, about twenty-five miles northeast of St. Louis. He came to manhood's estate with a gigantic physique, being six feet two and one-half inches tall, and possessed of strength proportionate to his size.

The early trend and bent of any given life, go far toward determining the scope of later activities, and the measure of life's accomplishments. In young Ellet's case, as we have already seen, circumstances indicated the occupation which regard for his health forced upon him. But farming furnished no adequate field for the exercise of those abilities which he subsequently displayed, in so marked a degree. Hence the record of his early manhood presents little for historical mention. Though not what could properly be called orthodox in his religious tenets, Alfred Ellet was a man of fine moral character—pure minded—strictly temperate in life—kindly in spirit—and with an uncompromising sense of justice and right.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Alfred Ellet was living in Bunker Hill, Ill., not in idle luxury, but in comfortable and easy circumstances. At that time his aged and widowed mother, to whom reference is made elsewhere in these pages, was making her home in his family. This woman was worthy the highest admiration and the deepest devotion of her children, and this was spontaneously accorded her by them. It was, to the citizens of Bunker Hill, no unusual thing

to see this aged mother and her son Alfred upon the street together. In his escort of her the son's manner was ever that of a youthful and ardent lover toward his intended bride. She leaned confidently upon his strong arm, while with solicitous care he chose her way, selecting safe places for her feet, and seeming to hold his personal prowess in constant command for her protection.

The humiliating defeat of the Union forces at Bull Run, so near their old home, fired Alfred Ellet's patriotic soul, and in July, 1861, as captain of a company, raised by himself in and around Bunker Hill, he entered the service of his country, at the Arsenal, in St. Louis, his being Company I, 9th Missouri Infantry Volunteers. This entire regiment was composed of Illinois men, who had enlisted with the expectation of being mustered into an Illinois regiment, under President Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers; but the quota of that state was filled about a week before they were ready for muster, and so they were first accredited to Missouri, afterward however becoming the 59th Ill. Infantry.

Captain Ellet participated in the early and memorable Missouri campaigns, under Generals Fremont and Curtis, and was with his regiment in the battle of Pea Ridge. While in camp a few weeks later, he received an order to report to his brother, Charles Ellet, Jr. and was made second in command of the Mississippi River Ram Fleet, with the rank of Lieut. Colonel. The reader, who has perused the foregoing pages, is already familiar with his brilliant career as Commander of that fleet, after his brother's death, and is also aware that, in recognition of his distinguished service on the Mississippi, the War Department determined, in November, 1862, to enlarge his command, and promote him to the rank of Brigadier General. This new command, which included the rams, was the Mississippi River Marine Brigade, whose story is told in the succeeding pages.

In the ready adaptation of himself to the duties of both these commands, the remarkable resourcefulness of Ellet's mind found display that amazed even his most intimate friends. He at once mastered the knowledge of river craft, and navigation, having in a marked degree the faculty of availing himself quickly of the knowledge others had spent months and years in acquiring. Thus he was able to manage the affairs of the rams, maintaining their equipment and high

standard of efficiency, and later organize and equip the Brigade, and direct all its arrangement of boats for the transporting of his command. While not a military tactician, he skillfully gathered about him those who were, and availed himself of their knowledge. But at the front, where duty called, his courage and skill were unquestioned. Here he was quick to see advantageous positions, and the required movements of his forces. And so, although during his service as a brigade commander he was pitted against such skillful Confederate leaders as Shelby, Chalmers, Marmaduke, Walker, and the wily Wirt Adams, in no single instance was he outgeneraled by any of them. General Ellet was a superb horseman, and in action he was like a fierce lion stirred up in his lair, while his personal bearing amid the most appalling perils was ever an inspiration to his troops. In a sense exacting, in the measure of service and daring required of his subordinates, he was correspondingly generous and equally just, in his recognition of every service rendered by his inferiors.

The story of General Ellet's military service, very inadequately told in these pages, furnishes the true criterion for a just estimate of him as a man, and as a soldier. His worth to the Union cause, none better knew or appreciated, than the enemies of his country. While errors of judgment, and fault in minor detail of action, may perhaps be discerned by the critical, they pale into insignificance, when viewed in the light of his valorous deeds in the hour of his country's need. His patriotism and courage and loyalty were tested in many a fiery trial, and never was there a faltering in the path of duty. He could not escape envy and detraction, but his eminent career placed him far above them, and the annals of his country have made his name imperishable.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE MARINE BRIGADE.

During the year 1862 the western divisions of the Union army and navy achieved important victories, in part recorded in the preceding pages, and these in large measure contributed toward the successful outcome of the Civil War.

Early in that year, General Grant had taken Forts Henry and Donelson, compelling the evacuation of Bowling Green and Columbus; Nashville was occupied by Union troops; the battle of Pittsburg Landing was fought and won; and the strongly fortified city of Corinth was captured.

On the Mississippi River a like series of victories was recorded in quick succession. Island Number Ten was captured; New Orleans surrendered; Forts Pillow and Randolph were evacuated; the Confederate flotilla was destroyed at Memphis, and that city made the important base of further army and navy operations.

The Mississippi River was thus practically open to Vicksburg, and its safe navigation became essential to the successful operation of our armies. Down its deep, turbid, channel must be transported the reinforcements, provisions, and munitions of war, needed for the strengthening, support, and equipment of our forces in the field. From St. Louis to Vicksburg stretched eight hundred miles of watery way. The mighty river wended its course over many treacherous shoals, and between tortuous banks, through the very heart of disloyal territory, still in possession of scattered forces of the enemy. Such was the conformation of the stream, that the banks afforded ample and inviting opportunity for the masking of Confederate batteries, and the concealment of guerrilla bands, located for the purpose of firing upon, and capturing or sinking, passing vessels richly freighted with government supplies. The gumboats of the river navy afforded no adequate relief from this harrassing peril. For when compelled by the fire of the gumboats to retire from their chosen positions, the enemy had only to withdraw a mile or two into the interior, and either wait until the gumboats were gone, or select another position a

few miles above or below, and there renew their operations. Had all the upper Mississippi navy been scattered along the river from Cairo to Vicksburg, and each given a reasonable beat to patrol, there would not have been enough vessels to insure our transports the safe navigation of the river. That which was manifestly and imperatively demanded by the situation was, the organization and equipment of a military force which could not only successfully fight the harrassing guerrillas upon the water, but which could also disembark troops to fight them on land; and if necessary, pursue them far into the interior, making it hazardous for these bands to prosecute their partisan warfare, and insuring our transports safe navigation.

The foregoing statement of the situation finds fullest confirmation in Admiral Porter's Naval History. At pages 331-2-3, he says: "One portion of Admiral Porter's command, the Marine Brigade, is entitled to special mention. When he assumed command of the Mississippi Squadron, the Admiral applied for a force of marines, to be carried in suitable vessels accompanying the gunboats, and to be landed at points where parties of guerrillas were wont to assemble. The gunboats alone could not break these parties up, and it was therefore necessary to have trained soldiers at hand to chase and annihilate them. The Navy Department could not furnish the marines asked for, but the War Department undertook to furnish the necessary vessels to carry these soldiers about. The command was given to Brigadier General, Alfred W. Ellet, and as the members of this family had before proved themselves brave and enterprising men, several of them were given appointments in the Marine Brigade."

The importance to the Union cause of the special service for which the Marine Brigade was organized, is further shown in a letter from which we make some extracts, written by Mr. Seddon, the Confederate Secretary of War, to General Kirby Smith, and which was captured near Natchez by the Brigade itself. In that letter Mr. Seddon advises that: "Small bands of men be raised, to be armed with rifles and field pieces, for the express purpose of interrupting navigation on the Mississippi. . . . The work must be accomplished at all hazards, and at whatever cost, as the possession of the river by the enemies of the Confederacy, is having a bad effect upon Confed-

“erate prospects abroad. . . . I wrote you some time ago, that commissions in blank had been sent to the Department of the Lower Mississippi, to be filled up with the names of parties who will undertake this work.”

Secretary Stanton was quick to comprehend this critical situation on the Mississippi, and when there came to him, from Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet, a strong communication relating to this matter, he was prompt to act. Summoning Ellet, who had just been made a Brigadier, to Washington, for conference respecting the organization, and the needful transportation for the proposed command, the details were arranged, and within an incredibly brief time there was formed and equipped for active warfare an entirely novel arm of the service. Belonging to the army it was yet, necessarily, as the ram fleet had been, to co-operate with the navy. And it was destined to play an important part in making it possible for the great Father of Waters again to “flow unvexed to the sea.” We now enter upon the story of this unique command, with the single purpose of giving to the world a consecutive and authentic account of the heroic deeds of the officers and men composing it.




CHAPTER I



Nov. 1862—March '63

Guerrilla Warfare on the Mississippi. The Need of a Marine Force Strongly Represented by Admiral Porter. Practical Suggestions From Lieut. Col. A. W. Ellet.—He is Summoned to Washington and Made Brigadier General. The Mississippi Marine Brigade Authorized.—Organized at Benton Barracks During Winter of 1862-63.—Incidents, Orders, Etc.—Boats Fitted Out on the Ohio, Brought to St. Louis.—Command Embarked for the Front.—The Inundated Situation of Grant's Army Above Vicksburg.

The reader who has followed the foregoing pages, has seen the prompt action of the Secretary of War in producing the ram fleet when the necessity, and the man for the emergency, appeared. Like conditions again appealed to this great souled patriot, and again he meets the emergency as before, by immediate, vigorous, and successful action. For the new warfare along the upper Mississippi, the strong representations of the need of a mobile force, presented by Admiral Porter (to the Navy Department, however), and like communications from the ram fleet commander, coupled with his practical suggestions of how it could be operated, all impressed the War Secretary, who already had the promotion of Lieut. Colonel Ellet for gallantry in action, under consideration. Promptly he summoned Ellet to Washington, as he had his brother the year before, and with him went all over subject, with the results already noted. Some facts not generally known concerning these deliberations are preserved in a letter from General Ellet, written while at Washington, after attending conferences with Stanton and Halleck. They are of special historic interest and an extract containing them is here given: "General Halleck then read a proposition from Admiral Porter—that General Ellet be ap-

"pointed to command Naval Brigade, which he (Porter) had asked to "have formed, and placed under his (Porter's) command. From this "proposition Secretary Stanton dissented, and said he had determined "to give General Ellet the Brigade asked for by Porter, and to main- "tain Ellet's entire command under control of the War Department, "—Ellet to receive instructions from, and make reports to, the War "Department, as before, but to co-operate heartily with the navy."

In accordance the understanding arrived at, the following orders of instruction were issued:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY.

Washington, D. C., November 1, 1862.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet:

The Secretary of War directs that you immediately proceed to organize a Marine Brigade for service on the Mississippi River, to consist of one regiment of Infantry, four squadrons of Cavalry, and one Battery of Light Artillery. These will be called the Mississippi Volunteers, and the officers will be commissioned by the President of the United States.

They will be organized in the same manner as is provided for other volunteers, and will act under your command, in connection with the Ram Fleet, and in co-operation with the Western gun-boats. A mustering officer will be assigned by the War Department to assist you in mustering and organizing your Brigade. You will select recruiting officers and submit their names for commission by the President. The Brigade should be organized with the greatest possible dispatch. From your known capacity and energy much will be expected of you in raising this Brigade, and its employment on the Western waters.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK.

General-in-Chief.

It would seem, however, that influences must have been immediately brought to bear upon the President, for with Ellet's commission, came this personal order from Mr. Lincoln:

EXECUTIVE MANSION.

Washington, D. C., November 7, 1862.

Ordered:

That Brigadier General Ellet report to Rear Admiral Porter for instructions, and act under his directions, until otherwise ordered by the War Department.

A. LINCOLN.

In compliance with this authority, General Ellet at once recommended to the War Department, for appointment as officers under

him in this new command, the following named men, and they were duly commissioned by President Lincoln: Capt. W. D. Crandall, A. A. G.; Lieuts. E. C. Ellet and Sanford G. Searritt, Aides de Camp; Capt. George Q. White, A. Q. M.; Capt. James C. Brooks, A. C. S.; Capt. W. M. Lewis, Fleet Paymaster; and Maj. James Roberts, Surgeon-in-Chief.

Having made these recommendations, General Ellet returned at once to Mound City, Ills., where some of the rams were undergoing repairs. Arriving there on the 19th of November, the General was accorded a most enthusiastic reception from his command. From the flag-staff on every vessel of the ram fleet present floated the Stars and Stripes, while the guns on the flagship boomed out a Brigadier's salute. On the evening of this day, assembled in the cabin of the flagship, the officers and men of the ram fleet presented to the General an elegant sword, of most beautiful design and rarest workmanship, with belt and sash to match. Captain Crandall, made the presentation speech, to which General Ellet briefly responded, in a most feeling and appreciative manner. The presentation was followed by a banquet with toasts, of which latter the following are samples: "The Ram Fleet—May it Never be Fleeced." "Cotton—May what we Capture from Traitors in the South, be spun to hang Traitors in the North." "The Mississippi River.—When the Independence of the So-Called Confederacy is Acknowledged—May her Waters flow Through the Channel of the St. Lawrence." "The Marine Brigade—May it be as Successful under our General as the Ram Fleet has been under our Colonel—Alfred W. Ellet". Leaving such directions as were necessary for the completion of the work on the rams, the General then repaired to St. Louis, having already sent ahead his Assistant Adjutant General, and some other officers, who had established Headquarters on the second floor, of rooms on Third street, not far from the Postoffice. These Headquarters soon became a veritable beehive, where the Assistant Adjutant General with his clerks, and the recruiting and other officers, with their assistants, worked early and late.

Recruiting for the new Brigade was, however, soon found to be slow and difficult. The large bounties paid, and the drafts made in various states to enable them to make up their quota of troops, operated strongly against the securing of men for the new command, which,

belonging to no particular state, could offer no bounty to recruits, as inducement to enter its service. Again, men proposing to enlist naturally preferred to enter companies and regiments raised in their immediate locality. To overcome these difficulties, and accelerate the work of recruiting, General Ellet wrote as follows to Washington, proposing the enlistment of convalescent men from the hospitals:

St. Louis, Mo., December 13, 1862.

Major General H. W. Halleck, General-in-Chief:—

General:—I have the honor to report that recruiting for the Mississippi Marine Brigade progresses very slowly, and in view of the importance of its early formation, and the great difficulty of enlisting men at this time, I would respectfully suggest that I be authorized to obtain men from commands already in the service. I would further suggest that these men be obtained from the convalescents in hospitals. Many men who are utterly unfitted for the ordinary service in the field would make efficient soldiers for this service, which is so much lighter and less fatiguing. It is especially suggested that by this means the hospitals may be greatly relieved, and the men rendered serviceable who will otherwise continue to be a burden upon the country, or have to be discharged. Again, these men being disciplined soldiers will, as soon as formed into companies, be ready for service, while recruits will have to be kept out of service until drilled. The boats are purchased and being put in condition to receive the men, and it is earnestly hoped by the means proposed the Brigade may be ready as soon as the boats. Thus the value of the command from which the men are taken will not be impaired while this service will be greatly promoted.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

Receiving no reply, the following telegram was subsequently sent.

St. Louis, Mo., December 20, 1862.

Maj. Gen. H. W. Halleck, General-in-Chief:

I telegraphed you a week ago, asking if I could be allowed to enlist men from the convalescent hospitals—men who can not endure the marching, and yet are good soldiers for moderate service.

Great labor might thus be saved, and the Brigade soon got ready. Recruiting is very slow. I also want some one appointed to pay the advance and bounty to my recruits. Who is to do it? I am embarrassed from not being able to meet these difficulties. Please inform me immediately.

A. W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

To these requests now came the following response:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., December 21, 1862.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, St. Louis, Mo:

The Secretary of War authorizes you to recruit from convalescents in hospital. General Curtis will muster out such as enlist in your Brigade. An officer will be sent immediately to pay bounty, etc.

H. W. HALLECK,

General-in-Chief.

Following this, and in keeping with orders sent direct to them, General Curtis and General Wright each issued an order which we give below:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI.

Special Order No. 89.

Pursuant to order from the Secretary of War, Brigadier General Ellet is authorized to enlist convalescents from any hospital. Captain Burrill, U. S. Mustering Officer, upon orders from General Ellet, will muster out any such soldiers or recruits as report to him. * * *

By command Major General Curtis.

H. Z. CURTIS.

A. A. G.

GENERAL ORDERS, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF OHIO.

Cincinnati, February 12, 1863.

By direction of the War Department Brigadier General Ellet is authorized to recruit for his fleet from convalescents in the Department. Officers empowered by General Ellet to enlist convalescents under this authority, will submit to these Headquarters full and complete lists of the convalescents recruited by them, giving the company and regiment of each recruit, with a view to their being discharged from their present service. Similar lists will be furnished by the recruiting officers to the officers commanding the posts where recruits are obtained.

By command of Major General Wright.

C. W. FOSTER.

A. A. G.

Similar orders were issued by other western department commanders.

The way thus cleared, recruiting for the Marine service went rapidly forward. During the rest of December and all of January and February, officers with proper credentials were sent to the leading hospitals in the western departments, and men were everywhere found eager to enter this new service. St. Louis, Louisville, Nashville, Cincinnati, and New Albany, made large contributions in the

way of recruits to the Brigade. From Cleveland and other points others came later. The following are fair samples of recruiting literature sent out at this time:

MISSISSIPPI MARINE BRIGADE!

SOLDIERING MADE EASY! NO HARD MARCHING! NO CARRYING KNAPSACKS! -
\$100,00 BOUNTY!!

A Marine Brigade, to act in concert with the invincible Ram Fleet, is to be raised immediately. All under the command of Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet. Large Steamboats are engaged to carry the troops down into the heart of Rebeldom, and open the Mississippi and her tributaries to the navigation of the Northwest. There will be but very little marching for any of the troops. They will be provided on the Boats with good cooks and bedding.

General Ellet has received special permission from the Secretary of War to receive volunteers for the Brigade from the drafted men of every state. Those who are desirous of serving their country, exempt from the usual hardships of soldiers, will do well to join this organization. Transportation will be furnished to Headquarters, St. Louis, for all Volunteers.

¶ The undersigned is a Recruiting Officer for this Brigade, either for Cavalry, Artillery or Infantry.

His office will be found at A. S. Foot's Intelligence Office, Bank-St., opposite Weddell House.

CAPT. J. R. CRANDALL.

[From a Handbill].

"The proposed service is especially attractive to old soldiers. It has the following advantages:

1. There are no trenches to dig.
2. There are no rebel houses to guard.
3. There is no picket duty to perform.
4. There is no danger of camps in the mud, but always a chance to sleep under cover.
5. There is no chance of short rations.
6. The command will always be kept together."

THE "MISS. MARINE BRIGADE."

CONVALESCENT SOLDIERS! HURRAH BOYS!

Brigadier General Ellet having obtained permission from the War Department to recruit convalescent soldiers from any hospital, is organizing a Miss. Marine Brig. A regiment is just organizing in St. Louis and promises to become the most renowned in the service.

It is raised for, and becomes a part of the above named Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, well known as Commander of the Miss. Ram Fleet. The "Ellet Scouts" will be furnished good quarters on trans-

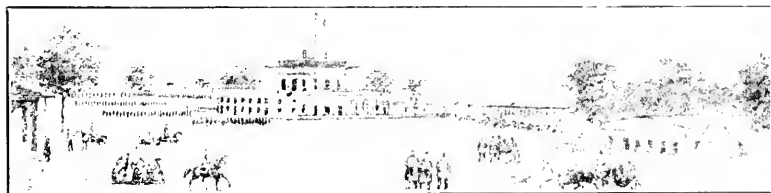
ports fitted out expressly for them, where they will keep all their valuables, clothing, stores, etc., etc., and with other parts of the Brigade (consisting of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery), on similar vessels, will keep company and act in concert with the Miss. Ram Fleet. No long, hard marches, camping without tents or food, or carrying heavy knapsacks, but good, comfortable quarters, and good facilities for cooking at all times.

The "Ellet Scouts" are expected to see plenty of active service on the Mississippi River and its tributaries in keeping it clear of rebel guerrillas, and securing to the public the free, and safe navigation of the great highways. They are expected to act promptly and at short notice, in concert with some of the rams and gun-boats at distant points, with secrecy and dispatch, and landing, to operate upon shore in an attack in the rear, or sudden assault.

This Brigade will become famous in the annals of the Miss. river warfare, as the Ram Fleet has already done. Now is the time if ever you can serve your country and consult your own comfort at the same time. Every soldier re-enlisting in this Brigade is entitled to a final settlement, and all pay in arrears will be paid up promptly, besides \$2 premium, one month's pay in advance, and \$25 bounty for re-enlisting.

Published by order of Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet.

CAPT. W. H. WRIGHT,
Recruiting Officer.



View of Benton Barracks—Winter of 1862-63. Where the Marine Brigade was Organized and Drilled.

During this period of organization, the new command was quartered at Benton Barracks, which comprised the fair grounds, in the northwestern outskirts of the city. There the men were collected, uniformed, and equipped, and, under the command of Lieut. Colonel George E. Currie, a master in discipline and tactics, were daily exercised in company, regimental, and brigade drill. The winter was an excessively cold one and the barracks proved none too comfortable for the men. The companies were furnished but one heating stove each, for the warming of their quarters. The men of Company A Infantry came to their captain requesting that they be provided with a second stove. But Captain Newell found himself unable to comply with their request, for the simple reason that the quartermaster did not

own a stove foundry. Apprised of this fact, the men smilingly said they could "draw" a stove, themselves, and the captain suggested that they do so. Sure enough, in the morning two glowing stoves were radiating heat in Co. A's quarters. The men offered no explanations, and the captain prudently asked no questions. But when, later in the day, an officer with authority to search for a lost stove appeared, it was learned that the Marines had gone into the company quarters of a neighboring regiment, while the men were in their dining-room, eating supper, and had carried away their red-hot stove, pipe and all, and set it up again in the quarters of Co. A. The captain was of course implicated, but escaped serious complications on the plea of ignorance.

As already seen by the original order for its organization, the Brigade consisted of one regiment of infantry, four companies of cavalry, and one battery of field artillery. The infantry was subsequently mounted, and the whole command was, later on, familiarly known as "Ellet's Horse Marines." Captain Newell says that he had an affectionate but mischievous young niece who, when he was at home on furlough, delighted to seat him beside herself at the piano, while she played and sang one of the popular war songs of the day:

"I am Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines,
I give my horse good corn and beans;
Of course it's quite beyond my means,
Though I'm Captain in the army."

The Marine uniform was the same as that worn in the army at large, save the caps, which were made with full, round tops, broad, straight visors, and a wide green band with trimmings of gold lace. The arms issued were new, and wherever the command, or any part of it, appeared, it was readily recognized, and received many tokens of admiration. February 21st, 1863, a general review of all the troops in and around St. Louis, was held, and the Brigade upon that occasion made a proud showing.

While the organization of the Brigade was thus being perfected, following the suggestion of General Ellet—as approved by the Q. M. Gen. at Washington—Captain James Brooks, Government Purchasing Q. M., bought at New Albany and Louisville, and fitted up, the fol-

lowing named steamers: AUTOCRAT, [B. J.] ADAMS, BALTIC, DIANA, FAIRCHILD, [JOHN] RAINE, and WOODFORD. These were fine, large boats, formerly New Orleans packets. The FAIRCHILD was fitted out as a quartermaster and commissary boat, and the WOODFORD as a hospital boat, the rest being designed for the accommodation and transportation of the officers and men, and their horses.

We will here give a brief description of these steamers, as refitted for the use of the Brigade: Their boilers were protected by heavy timbers and huge coal-bunkers. From the lower deck to the hurricane roof was built all around, a barricade of solid, two inch oak plank, of double thickness, and with two inch dimension strips between. Through these barricades were cut loopholes for muskets, and large portholes, with swinging doors, for ventilation. For the protection of pilots the pilot-houses were provided, on each side, with semi-circular sheets of boiler iron. The after part of the cabin decks were officers' quarters, while the forward part served for the men's mess-room. The men's sleeping quarters were upon an intermediary deck, built in, aft of the boilers. Both officers and men were provided with suitable wash-rooms, bath-rooms, and facilities for washing clothes. Above the fore-castle, hung upon pulleys, always ready to be attached to a huge crane on either side, and so quickly lowered and swung ashore, was a large, railed gangway, over which two horses could pass abreast. As protection against any attempt at boarding, each vessel was provided with a hot-water hose, connected with the boiler, and hung where it was in readiness for instant use. Only such furniture, bedding, etc., were retained out of the original equipment of the boats as was actually needed for the comfort of officers and men. The rest was sold and the proceeds therefrom turned into the Government Treasury.

March 4, 1863, General Ellet sent to Washington this telegram:

St. Louis, Mo., March 4, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Six companies infantry organized 527 men: four companies cavalry 368 men: one company artillery 110 men, and six guns light artillery. Two hundred recruits just received. Will be organized by Friday.

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brigadier General.

The command when completely organized was officered as follows:

GENERAL OFFICERS.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet; Capt. W. D. Crandall, A. A. G.; Lieuts. E. C. Ellet and Sanford G. Searratt, Aids de Camp; Maj. James Roberts, Surgeon-in-Chief; Assistant Surgeons, James S. Myers, Israel Cleaver, David S. Booth, C. R. Eldridge, R. W. McMahan, Theodore Jacobs, Richard P. Cutley and Alva J. Malone; Quartermaster, Capt. George Q. White; Commissary of Subsistence, Capt. Jas. C. Brooks; Purchasing Quartermaster, Capt. James Brooks; Paymaster of Crews, Capt. Wm. H. Lewis. [No chaplain was asked for or appointed.]

INFANTRY REGIMENT.

Colonel Charles R. Ellet; Lieut. Col. George E. Currie; Maj. D. S. Tallerdoy; Adjutant Lieut. H. G. Curtis; A. Q. M. Lieut. James Beach. [No chaplain].

Co. A. Captain, I. D. Newell; First Lieut., Philip F. Howell; Second Lieut., Theodore H. Guildemeister.

Co. B. [No Captain]; First Lieut., Tobias S. Benson; Second Lieut., Francis Aid.

Co. C. Captain, E. G. Hughes; First Lieut., J. A. M. Cox; Second Lieut., Alexis Lemmon.

Co. D. Captain, Calvin Reed; First Lieut., Delos Wilson; Second Lieut., J. C. Fortune.

Co. E. Captain C. G. Fisher; First Lieut., D. F. Markle; Second Lieut., Enos Snyder.

Co. F. Captain, Thomas C. Groshon; First Lieut., O. H. Whitehead; Second Lieut., Albert Dean.

Co. G. Captain, E. S. Havens; First Lieut., McCune; Second Lieut., Horatio N. Rowe.

Co. H. Captain, James P. Harper; First Lieut., Allen; Second Lieut., William H. Sloan.

Co. I. Captain, A. P. Cox; First Lieut., Perry Gregg; Second Lieut., A. C. Hawley.

Co. K. Captain, Lehigh Dakau; First Lieut., Michael Brennan; Second Lieut., R. F. Housel.

CALVARY BATTALION.

Major, James M. Hubbard; Adj't., Lieut. Leroy Mayne, Co. C.

Co. A. Captain, J. R. Crandall; First Lieut., Martin V. Owen; Second Lieut., Charles Pollock.

Co. B. Captain, J. M. Brown; First Lieut., S. F. Cole; Second Lieut., John Warren.

Co. C. Captain, O. F. Brown; First Lieut., Samuel Carlisle; Second Lieut., LeRoy Mayne.

Co. D. Captain, William H. Wright; First Lieut., Frank Hanscom; Second Lieut., John B. Kirk.

LIGHT ARTILLERY.

Captain, David P. Walling; First Lieuts., E. H. Nichols and John L. Plumley; Second Lieuts., A. J. Gibson and Samuel R. Holmes.

NOTE: Changes in this roster were of frequent occurrence. They are noted wherever record was found. In the latter part of the Brigade's history, many were serving as officers, whose commissions were never issued.

Commissions were later asked and granted for staff regimental officers, to serve in the ram fleet, as follows: John A. Ellet, to be Lieutenant and Colonel; John W. Lawrence, to be Major; and George W. Bailey, to be Lieutenant and Adjutant.

On March 5th, six of the Marine boats, all of the fleet except the hospital steamer *Woodford*, whose refitting was not yet completed, reached St. Louis. The time intervening between the 5th and the 13th was spent in placing on board the steamers the necessary stores and equipments, paying the men, locating them in their quarters on the boats, coaling, etc., etc. This task was completed at 6 o'clock a. m., March 13th, when the *Autocrat*, *Adams*, *Baltic*, *Diana*, and *Faurembault* cast loose their lines, swung out from the wharf, and started on the long run for Vicksburg. To await the coming of the recruits (then on their way to Benton Barracks) Captain Newell was left behind, temporarily in command of the *Raixne*, with instructions to join the fleet below, as soon as possible. Nothing of importance transpired during the run to Cairo, where the fleet arrived and anchored above the city, in the Ohio river, at 9 o'clock a. m., of the 14th, having spent the previous night tied up at an island above.

At Cairo the hospital boat *Woodford*, and also the ram *Lyncaster* (just repaired and again ready for service) were found waiting. On the night of the 14th occurred the first loss of life in the command. One of the men, wrapped in a blanket, was seen by a deck-hand to pass over on to a coal barge, alongside the *Adams*, and then plunge into the river. The next day a man by the name of Ransom, belonging to Co. F, Inf., was missing. It was never known whether it was an accident, a suicide, or the man had walked in his sleep, or whether it was a desertion. Comrade A. J. Pierce in his diary significantly noted respecting this man: "He had been very quiet for some time," and the presumption at the time, was, that he was slightly deranged.

The fleet remained at Cairo during the 14th, 15th and 16th coaling, and attending to other necessary matters. While at anchor here

several cases of small-pox appeared among the men, but prompt and effectual measures were taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

The fleet on its downward trip touched at New Madrid, and again at Fort Randolph, where the cavalry was sent off on a scout, and the infantry turned out for drill. March 18th the fleet reached Memphis, meeting with quite a different reception from that accorded the commander and his brother, with their ram fleet, on the previous sixth of June.

While passing the small, abandoned town of Eunice, on the Arkansas shore, March 21st, the fleet was hailed from the river bank by a squad of "buttermits," about fifteen in number, who presented themselves, in one rank, waving a white flag. The *AUTOCRAT*, responding to their signal, rounded to, and took them on board. They proved to be deserters from the Confederate army, most of them conscripts, who had escaped in various ways, and joyfully embraced this, their first opportunity, of entering the Union lines. Some of these men were quite intelligent, and told a woful story respecting the situation in the interior of Arkansas, and of the sorrowful deprivation to which their families, and all known Unionists, were subjected. They willingly parted with their arms, consisting of rifles, shot-guns, etc., and six of their number enlisted under Lieut. Benson, Co. B Infantry. One of these men was J. H. S. Harbour, from whom a letter (received July 5th, 1887) said that, of the six only himself and M. A. Steelman, were then living. The fleet reached Young's Point, March 22nd, and the next day General Ellet called upon General Grant—Admiral Porter being at this time absent.

On the 24th, General Ellet went across the point, and called upon Admiral Farragut, below Vicksburg. It was at this interview that arrangements were made for running the Vicksburg batteries by the rams *SWITZERLAND* and *LANCASTER*, an account of which has already been given in the former part of this history.

March 26th the following order was issued—which changed Commanders on the ram fleet, and placed a new man at the head of the regiment:

Headquarters M. M. Brigade, Flagship *Autoerat*, March 26, 1863.
Special Orders No. 28. Extract.

* * * 111. Col. Charles R. Ellet will at once assume command of the

First Infantry, M. M. Brigade, and will hereafter be obeyed and respected as the commanding officer of that regiment.

By command of Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet.

W. D. CRANDALL,

Captain and A. A. G.

On March 27th a Sergeant of Co. H, Inf. [name not found] died on the *Baltic*, and was buried with military honors.

About this time there was manifested in the Command a mutinous spirit, which finally developed into serious insubordination and violence. That there was widespread dissatisfaction, and preconcerted action among the men, was apparent from the fact that disorderly conduct of the same general character, occurred among the men almost simultaneously, on the *ADAMS*, *BALTIC*, *RAINE* and *AUTOCRAT*. The trouble was, professedly, respecting the character and quantity of the food furnished the men. It was claimed by them that they "were restricted to but two biscuits apiece, with rice and coffee." On one boat the tables and benches in the men's mess quarters were overturned, the partition between the men's mess-room and the officers' quarters was demolished, and the Officer of the Day violently struck in the face, by one of the rioters. Upon the *ADAMS*, order was not restored until Captain Fisher, commanding the boat, and Captain O. F. Brown, Officer of the Day, had threatened to use their revolvers. It is quite probable there was ground for complaint on the part of the men, but far from sufficient ground to justify them in their revolt. The command had been but recently organized, and life upon the boats was new to all. Sufficient time had not elapsed for complete adjustment in the various departments of the service, to the new conditions. The cooks were inexperienced, and their judgment of the men's digestive capacities was fallible. Had the men respectfully represented their grievance to the proper officers, their complaint would doubtless have been patiently heard, and the trouble averted. But the conduct of the men could not be silently passed by. Consideration for the future welfare of the command demanded discipline. Accordingly four of the ringleaders were arrested, ironed, and subsequently court-martialed. One had stoppage of pay for six months, and was sentenced to hard labor for the same period, with a twenty-four pound ball fastened to his leg; the second lost twelve months pay, and was sentenced to hard labor for an equal time, with a twenty pound ball and chain;

the third, a corporal, was reduced to the ranks, and forfeited four months pay; the fourth lost six months pay and was sentenced to fourteen days solitary confinement in double irons, with a diet of hard bread and water. It was a severe lesson to these four men, but a salutary one to the entire command.

On the night of the 28th a furious gale swept the river doing great damage to shipping. The smoke-stacks of the *FARGHULE* were blown down and badly damaged, while the *DIANA* lost a barge.

The situation above Vicksburg was now an embarrassing one for an invading force. During the two months preceding, Grant had been gradually accumulating troops and supplies. He was compelled to encamp along the levee on the western bank of the river, as the low lands and swamps in rear were mostly under water. This condition was made worse by several efforts at flooding the bayous, by cutting the levees above, in the vain hope of creating a "water route" for transports, by which troops and supplies could be gotten below Vicksburg, for the attack from the south. Much sickness now prevailed in the camps, which extended many miles along the western bank of the river, and the prospect of any effective army operations against Vicksburg looked gloomy. The canal, commenced the previous year by General Williams' engineers, and abandoned, had been resumed, under instructions from Washington. Grant himself had little faith in either the canal project, or any of the proposed "water routes" around Vicksburg, but lent assistance to all of them, in succession, as he asserts in his history, to give the troops something to do, and the public that was clamoring for a move on the rebel stronghold, something with which to satisfy its clamor, while he was waiting for enough dry land to appear, on which he could march his troops to his intended point of attack. The canal was now nearing completion. But just when the project gave its greatest promise of success, the Mississippi had taken another sudden rise, breaking through the dam at the upper end, sweeping away the implements of labor, filling the canal full, and driving the men precipitately to the levee for safety and for camping ground. And so this plan failed. One of the routes Grant's engineers had then sought out, was to open the river through Lake Providence, into the Tensas, and Black Rivers, so that troops and transportation could be sent on boats by this route past Vicks-

burg. But owing to the uncertain channel of the Tensas, and the vast timber growth in these swampy regions, this route, after much labor had been given in the vain effort to clear it, had to be abandoned. Another project had just now been exploited—the forcing of a passage through a narrow channel from the Mississippi river to Moon Lake, on the east side, and thence into the Coldwater. This was known as the Yazoo Pass route, by which it was expected to get through into the Yazoo River with light gunboats, accompanied by troops, and destroy the Confederate transports and gunboats then on the stocks, at Yazoo City. But, as we saw, this expedition, like the others, failed, and orders were given for the withdrawal of all troops, and their concentration at Milliken's Bend. Such was the situation when the Marine Brigade first reached Young's Point, from St. Louis.



CHAPTER II

April-May, 1863

*Ordered Up the Tennessee. Drowning of Two Lieutenants.—Conroy's
Streight's Famous Expedition.—Scouting Along the Tennessee.—Sinking of
Tug Cleveland. Brigade's First Fight at Duck River.—Cavalry Fight at
Beaver Dam.—Burning of Austin.—Fleet at Helena.—Scouting at the Mouth
of White River.—Again Off Young's Point.*

From March 23d, when the fleet reached Young's Point, until April 2nd, the Brigade was comparatively inactive. But while the Brigade was unemployed, its Commander and his staff were busy. This was the ram fleet's inning, and it was to play a desperate game, with the Army and Navy as interested onlookers. Between the two dates above mentioned, and under General Ellet's personal supervision, occurred the famous blockade-running episode of the SWITZERLAND and LANCASTER, related in Ram Fleet history, which was upon the one hand a demonstration of Ellet's daring and efficiency, and upon the other a foreshadowing of what might be expected of his entire command in the future.

But the Brigade was not long to remain idle. April 2nd, under orders from Admiral Porter, the fleet sailed for Greenville, Miss., a place noted for its intense loyalty to the Southern cause. This locality was often visited subsequently, by the Brigade, but on this particular occasion we hoped to encounter the noted guerrilla, Colonel Ferguson, known to be in that vicinity, with a considerable force. While en route to Greenville, on 3rd, the Ram MOXAREN lost two barges by running on a snag, and a short landing was made at Lake Providence to give her one of the DIANA's barges. On the 4th the fleet landed below Lake Village, for scouting and foraging purposes.

The Cavalry disembarked with the intention of scouting the adjacent country, and of visiting the town itself. In this scout General Ellet and Captain Crandall, his Adjutant, participated. Before they had gone far Captain Crandall met with a peculiar experience, an account of which, given in his own words, in a home letter written soon after the event, reads: "Lake Village is some miles back from the landing, and between the two is a lake fed by numerous streams running in from crevasses in the river banks above. One company had taken the advance out, along the crooked levee road, and General Ellet and myself, with an orderly or two, followed the cavalry, a mile or so in the rear. When we came to where the road was crossed by one of these streams from the river, we could see that our men had turned to seek a ford higher up in the swamps. We followed their trail and came to a presumably shallow stream, running into the main channel, and across which I thought our men had ridden. This stream was about thirty yards wide. Not dreaming of danger I rode in, while the General, with more caution, halted. In a moment my horse stepped off what proved to be a perpendicular bank, and in we went, heels over head, into the swift-rolling torrent. I clung to my horse, but saw as I turned his head to the other side, that he was unaccustomed to the water, and would drown if compelled to sustain my weight. So, loosing the rein, I took to the water alone, and was about to reach the shore in safety, when my horse, who had reached land just above me, in a vain attempt to scale the steep bank fell backward almost upon me, and I was compelled to make a considerable circuit, still swimming, before I reached terra firma again, a task rendered by no means easier from having on huge cavalry boots, spurs, belt, pistols, etc. I came near losing my horse, but through the General's personal exertions, having caught him by the bridle, he was saved."

Captain DeCoster of the cavalry battalion, which General Ellet and his Assistant Adjutant General were following, met with a similar mishap. He says: "We had proceeded about three miles, when we found the water up to our horses bellies all the time. Coming to a stream no one dared cross, but I tried it. My horse plunged in all over, but I stuck to him, and he swam to the opposite shore. No one would follow me, so I moved along the bank with the water to

"my horse's back, but could find no crossing place, and the company
 "went off and left me. I then thought I would get back, and coming
 "to a log across the stream, I got a pole to measure the water, but
 "could find no bottom. But I concluded to try it anyway. I walked
 "the log and led my horse. In he went over head and ears, and came
 "near pulling me in with him. Reaching the other side, he could not
 "get up the bank. The water was just running over his back. I got
 "into the water, took off the saddle, and in about an hour succeeded
 "in getting him out, and following on after the command found
 "them waiting for me."

Thus it is seen that the Marines, as might indeed have been expected, took naturally to the water.

While at Lake Village, the Order and Instructions for the Tennessee river expedition were received from Admiral Porter, reading as follows:

U. S. Miss. Squadron, April 4, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, Commanding Marine Brigade:—

Sir:—Circumstances of a serious nature render it necessary that you should change your field of operations without delay to the Tennessee River. There will be a wider field for your enterprize there.

We have received news by way of Corinth of movements of the enemy in North Mississippi and Middle Tennessee, and I wish the Marine Brigade to proceed up the Tennessee with all dispatch and defend that line. The rebels are moving large forces of cavalry in front of General Rosecrans, and collecting all Partisan Rangers and loose companies of cavalry on the line of the Tallahatchee. The road from Duck River to Savannah, Tenn., is being put in good order. Everything portends an attack on Rosecrans with a powerful cavalry force to follow up any success, and make raids from North Mississippi and Middle Tennessee. The object in sending you is to defend this line of the Tennessee River. You will destroy all rafts, flatboats, skiffs or canoes and destroy all the means they may have of transporting an army. Saw mills should be destroyed and lumber burned up. If on arriving at the mouth of Duck River, you should find it safe to land there with your small force, you might with advantage proceed up that stream for some distance and destroy all the ferries. When you arrive at Hamburg Landing, you will likely find a messenger from Gen. Dodge, who will co-operate with you and also give you valuable information. You will keep your forces well together, and not let them act in detached parties. While your small force is massed, it will be very effective; when divided it might be soon used up. I am pushing a strong force of gunboats up the Tennessee River, and your vessels will be able to lie securely under the protection of their guns. If

you have no pilots for the Tennessee River, you may find them at Cairo, or you can by my authority obtain one or two from the gunboats on the Tennessee River. Dispatch is the great object just now, to break up the ferries before the enemy begins to cross. I hope to hear, General, that you are doing good service there. I will order the other rams to join you the moment they return, or if you should meet them on your way up detain them.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg Miss. Squadron.

General Grant's relation to this movement, and something of its purport, are indicated in a communication he sent at the same date, to the officer in command at Memphis:

Headquarters 16th A. C., before Vicksburg, April 4, 1863.

General S. A. Hurlbut, Memphis, Tenn.:

I have ordered a regiment of cavalry from Helena to you, and sent the steamer Illinois to take them. At my request Admiral Porter has ordered the Marine Brigade up the Tennessee River to co-operate with Dodge. This brigade have boats bullet-proof, and an armament of howitzers. When these troops pass Memphis, you will be able to judge of about the time they will reach Hamburg Landing, and can instruct Dodge to communicate with them there.

Very respectfully,

U. S. GRANT.

To impede the movements of the enemy in the campaign they were supposed to have inaugurated, (as outlined in Admiral Porter's Order to General Ellet) Col. A. D. Streight, then at Murphreesboro, was to make an important raid. He was to push his way into Western Georgia, cutting the railroads supplying the Confederate army by the way of Chattanooga, destroy all depots of supplies for the Confederate army, all manufactories of guns, ammunition, equipments and clothing, so far as he could, without occasioning so much delay as to endanger his return.

For the accomplishment of this mission, Colonel Streight was assigned to the command of an "Independent Provisional Brigade, for temporary purposes." This "Provisional Brigade" was to consist of the 51st Indiana and the 80th Illinois regiments, and portions of two Ohio regiments. The instructions to Colonel Streight directed him to proceed with his troops "to some good steamboat landing on the Tennessee river, not far above Fort Henry," and there to embark his

command, and proceed up the river. At Hamburg (if he could not safely go beyond on transports, or at Eastport if he could safely proceed thither by water) he was to effect a junction with General Dodge.

After making a feint upon Tusculumbia, in company with General Dodge, for the purpose of misleading the enemy, Colonel Streight was then to break away from Dodge's forces, and push forward with all possible dispatch to the accomplishment of his real mission.

In compliance with these orders, Colonel Streight moved his men by land to Nashville, and thence on steamers to Fort Donelson. Disembarking at that point, he sent his transports down the Cumberland and up the Tennessee, while he marched his men across to Fort Henry, a distance of about fifteen miles, there to await the return of his transports. In a communication to General Dodge dated April 7, General Hurlbut, at Memphis, thus speaks of Ellet's command, and reveals an important mistake in his understanding of the movement of the Marine Brigade. Grant's letter above quoted certainly left no room for such mistake, or the ridiculous error he fell into in consequence. We quote so much only as relates to the Marine Brigade: "I am informed that Ellet's Brigade is to be put under my orders. As soon as they arrive I shall order them up the Tennessee to co-operate with you, and report to you."

In executing his part of the Tennessee river plan, General Ellet's duties fell under three heads—first of all, to convoy Colonel Streight's empty transports up Tennessee river to Fort Henry; secondly, after rendering all possible assistance to Streight, in the capture of horses and mules for the mounting of his men, and after the safe re-embarkation of Streight's command, to proceed with and protect it to the initial point of his raid; and thirdly, after Streight had gone, to begin the work of destroying ferries, mills, lumber, etc., etc., as per instructions given by Admiral Porter.

Immediately upon receipt of the Admiral's order, General Ellet, with his fleet, started up stream. As the Brigade passed Greenville, Miss., on its way up the river, the troops, which had passed them at Lake Village, were seen disembarking. If the report of Brig. General D. S. Lee, of the Confederate army to General Pemberton, in command at Vicksburg, is to be confidently accepted, the Marine Brigade had a narrow escape in not reaching Greenville before

Steele's division. Under date of April 9th, 1863, General Lee says: "Colonel Ferguson gave the enemy, day before yesterday, such a check with his small force, that they were deterred from a further advance. They deployed seven regiments of infantry, artillery and cavalry. Their command, from all I can learn, consists of "Steele's Division, and the Marine Brigade, not to exceed six thousand." We can imagine that General Steele told quite a different story in his report of his expedition. Memphis was reached Tuesday, April 7th, at 10:30 p. m., and the fleet left at 9 a. m. the next day.

On the night of the 8th occurred one of the saddest incidents in the history of the Marine service. Lieut. W. H. Sloan of Co. H, Inf., so graphically related this incident in the "Historian" of July, '87, that we quote him verbatim: "When the fleet left St. Louis on its trip to the south, the steamer *JOHN RAINE* was left at St. Louis, and among the detached officers of the Brigade on her was Lieut. McCune. On the night of April 8th, our fleet found itself in the vicinity of New Madrid, Mo. I was on the *BALRIC* and our boat was moored to the Missouri shore. A large coal barge, from which the *BALRIC* was replenishing her supply of coal, had been landed on the outside. While engaged in taking this coal, the *JOHN RAINE* joined us from St. Louis, and landed outside the coal barge, in order also to take coal. While these matters were occurring, Lieut. Le Roy Mayne, Adjutant of Cavalry, and myself, were engaged in a quiet game of euchre. Mayne presently suggested that we go over to the *RAINE*, and see McCune. McCune, Mayne and myself were, in army parlance, "chums." It was about half past eight o'clock at night, when I secured a lantern, and Mayne and myself started. I being in the lead with the light, stepped over the single stage-plank, leading from the *BALRIC* to the coal barge, and turned to let Mayne have the benefit of the light, when I saw him step off into the rushing water between the *BALRIC* and the barge. I grabbed for him but failed to get hold of him, and he instantly disappeared from view. I heard his head strike the cross-timbers composing the guards. I then ran back across the deck of the *BALRIC* to the shore, and down the bank, hoping to get a boat and rescue him in case he survived the passing of the wheel. Another officer found an old skiff, and

"with a small piece of board we started to paddle about, looking for Mayne. While so engaged, we noticed the water was covered with small pieces of paper, and a soldier ran to the stern of the *BALTIMORE*, and cried to us that another man was overboard. But we caught no sight of either. Upon our return, we found that Lieut. McCune had at nearly the same moment, expressed his intention of going over from the *RAIXE* to the *BALTIMORE*, to see Mayne and myself, and had stepped into the river, at the same spot, and within a minute after poor Mayne. Lieutenant McCune had brought with him from St. Louis the discharges of four hundred men, and these were the papers we saw floating by, while hunting for Mayne. Some days before his death Mayne asked me to come to his room and said: "Old man, there's something going to happen to me. I don't know what it is. But I want to tell you where my folks live, and what I have, and if the worst comes, you take care of my things, and see that my parents get my trunk. He showed me an elegant gold watch that he carried, and then unfolding his necktie, an old style silk handkerchief, he showed me \$300.00 in greenbacks, wrapped within its folds, and worn around his neck. The necktie and watch disappeared with his body, which was never heard of afterwards. His remaining property was forwarded to his parents, living in Keosauqua, Iowa, as per his request."

Both these young men were efficient officers, and their death was a material loss to the command. Lieutenant Mayne had especially endeared himself to all who knew him. Young, handsome in person, with a frank, open, intelligent face, a courteous mien, and a soldierly carriage, he favorably impressed all with whom he was associated. This tragic occurrence cast a deep gloom over the command at the time, and even to this day tinges with sadness the war memories of Marine survivors.

At this point in our narrative, we quote from three or four of General Hurlbut's dispatches touching the Marine Brigade, which explain themselves and also show that he labored under the common mistake at the front, as to who controlled the movements of Ellet's command:

Memphis, Tenn., April 9, 1863.

Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, Vicksburg, Tenn.:

* * * Brig. Gen. Ellet ran by this place yesterday without reporting. I do not know for what point. I have advised that he be sent to the Cumberland or Tennessee to aid in the movement.

S. A. HURLBUT.

Memphis, Tenn., April 9, 1863.

Maj. Gen. W. S. Rosecrans, Murfreesboro, Tenn.:

It is important that gunboats should cruise from the mouth of Duck River up to Tusculum, during this march. Ellet's Marine Brigade ran by me yesterday without reporting, and are now within your reach. Use them on the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers. * * *

S. A. HURLBUT.

Memphis, Tenn., April 9, 1863.

Maj. Gen. W. S. Rosecrans:

Since my dispatch of today I learn that Ellet's Marine Brigade are ordered up the Tennessee River to co-operate with Dodge.

S. A. HURLBUT.

Memphis, Tenn., April 9, 1863.

General Dodge, Corinth, Miss.:

I am just informed by a letter from General Grant that Ellet's Marine Brigade has been ordered up the Tennessee to co-operate with you. You will open communication with him, and place him and his command under your orders. The Brigade passed here yesterday morning without reporting, for which I desire you to reprimand General Ellet. The Autocrat is his headquarters boat. You may expect him off Hamburg about tomorrow night, or on the 11th. * * * With the aid of the Marine Brigade, and such convoy as Rosecrans will bring with his fleet, you need not have any difficulty in clearing out the line of Bear Creek to Tusculum, and should be able to draw supplies from his boats, so as to prevent lumbering yourselves with much train.

S. A. HURLBUT.

It is perhaps needless to remark, as a conclusion to the above correspondence, with its suggestion of discipline, that no "reprimand" ever materialized.

The fleet reached Cairo early in the evening of April 10th, and remained there several days, awaiting the coming of Streight's transports out of the Cumberland River, and in the meantime making needed repairs on the boats, coaling, etc.

The following from General Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, sent to General Hurlbut at Memphis, shows the official stress put upon all connected with this great raid:

Murfreesboro, Tenn., April 12, 1863.

Gen. S. A. Hurlbut, Memphis, Tenn.:—

Colonel Streight with near 2,000 picked men will probably reach Eastport by Thursday next. Dodge, with the Marine Brigade and the gunboats, can occupy or whip the Tusculum forces, and let my forces go directly to its main object—the destruction of the railroads.

This great enterprise, fraught with great consequences, I beg you to commend to Dodge's care, enjoining on him to dispatch Streight, by every means, to his destination. Nothing, if possible, should for a moment arrest his progress.

W. S. ROSECRANS.

On the 14th the Brigade moved to Paducah, secured Tennessee river pilots, took Streight's boats under convoy, and began the run up that river. Late in the evening of the 15th, the expedition reached Fort Henry. At this point, Colonel Streight and his command were found in camp, awaiting the arrival of the boats. The 16th was consumed in embarking the raiding force, with the horses and mules, captured in this vicinity for their use.

While awaiting this embarkation, the ram *MONARCH* was sent with a transport ahead, up the river, to capture more horses and mules.

Leaving the Quartermaster boat *FANENNA* and one barge behind, next day, the entire fleet of eighteen vessels, comprising rams, Marine boats and transports, preceded by two gunboats, moved up stream. At Willis' Point the *MONARCH*, with its detachment, were found, they having in the meantime confiscated quite a lot of horses, mules and tobacco, and captured two prisoners.

Leaving this point, the fleet proceeded to Britt's Landing, where it remained over night. At Clifton, on the 18th, were witnessed the first depredations of the Confederate guerrillas, the punishment and expulsion of whom was one of the purposes for which the Marine Brigade had been sent hither. These marauders, some three hundred strong, coming in on the west side of the river, had had a fight with the Unionists of the vicinity, driving men, women, and children in, toward the river, burning their houses and destroying their property. These loyal Tennesseans were found on the bank of the river, occupying such temporary shelters as they had been able to construct, and with what few belongings they had been able to hastily gather up, and bring away from their homes. They seemed delighted

at the appearance of the fleet, and greeted it with waving of handkerchiefs, and with heartiest cheers for the Union. The sight was pathetic, and deeply touched the hearts of all who beheld it. The cavalry was promptly disembarked at this place, and the fleet passed on to Savannah—there to await their coming. The enemy precipitately retired before the force sent out, so that it was not possible to bring on a fight with them. But on their way across, the cavalry burned a distillery, a store, and a sawmill, used in the interest of the Confederate army, and also a large quantity of lumber. At this point dispatches were received from General Dodge, who was in the vicinity of Corinth. On the 19th two companies of the Marine cavalry were sent to carry dispatches to General Dodge, returning at midnight of the following day. They reported seeing the camp fires of the enemy, but did not encounter any hostile force. They discreetly returned by a different route from that by which they went, and there was afterward good reason for thinking that they thus escaped possible capture. On the night of this day Eastport was burned. The origin of the fire was never definitely ascertained. On the afternoon of the 20th detachments of both infantry and cavalry were sent out, on both sides of the river, and they captured nineteen prisoners, quite a lot of horses and mules, some lumber, a quantity of bacon, a number of bales of cotton, and also burned a mill.

The river was now rapidly falling, and it was decided that the Marine boats, which were all of heavy draught, must be promptly passed below the shoals. Accordingly, after putting off a squadron of cavalry under command of Maj. J. M. Hubbard, with instructions to meet the command below, at Boyd's Landing, the boats turned their prows down stream.

At Hamburg a small force was sent with dispatches to Corinth. At this point also a large number of refugees had collected, and begged to be taken north. A barge was specially fitted up for their accommodation, which was subsequently towed to Cairo, by the ram *HORNER*. On the 22nd, at Savannah, three companies were put ashore, and sent by land down to Cerro Gordo. They were out all night, and joined the command the next morning.

The following, quoted from a home letter of this date (April 23rd) from Capt. C. G. Fisher, graphically portrays the conditions

found in that locality: "Colonel Currie and myself, with a small troop, rode out ten miles today. We saw only rebel women whose husbands, fathers and brothers are in their army. The women, young and old, are trying to get a crop into the ground, and working willingly, hoping and believing their side will win some day, carding, spinning and weaving cotton cloth, and making it into wearing apparel in most every household. No new calico or other dress goods in their section for two years. We noticed two smart looking girls planting corn, as we went out, who were upon our return sewing, on the piazza. We had a pleasant talk with them, and they gave us samples of their home-made cloth. They were not willing to believe that so many men in our great Yankee armies could be absent from home without leaving farms untilled, business prostrated, and families in want, in the north."

The 23rd was an unfortunate day for the fleet. During that day the DIANA ran aground, and the tug CLEVELAND was sunk by running across the bows of the DIANA, in an attempt to run alongside of her while she was still under way. The competent sailing master of the AUTOCRAT, Samuel Henecks, at once set about the difficult task of raising the tug, and the following day had her again afloat. While lying at this point a large quantity of lumber, which had been worked up in a sawmill near by, was confiscated and brought on the boats. Early on the morning of the 25th, the fleet sailed again down stream. Landing at Clifton, which seemed to be a guerrilla rallying center, the infantry was put ashore, and went into the country a distance of some four or five miles, but failed to find the enemy—reported to be in this section in some considerable force. Upon this trip a large distillery was found and burned.

From information now gathered, and from evident indications, the country round about was swarming with guerrillas, and trouble was brewing. During the day the fleet was hailed by a woman, and when the AUTOCRAT drew in, near to shore, she informed General Ellet that the enemy had a battery planted below, and were waiting to attack us. Preparations were accordingly made for a fight, and the fleet ran cautiously, down to Britt's Landing, where it tied up for the night, placing upon shore a strong picket.

Sunday morning the 26th was foggy, and the fleet did not get under way until about seven o'clock. About half past eight o'clock the mouth of Duck river was reached. This stream empties into the Tennessee from the east, and just here is one of the many difficult points in the navigation of the Tennessee. Directly opposite the mouth of Duck river is a rocky shoal, which extending above, and a short distance below, intervenes itself between the channel of the Tennessee and the east shore. The channel at this point is narrow and tortuous, and the current swift, making it necessary for a steamer, when once she has entered upon the passage of these rapids, to go through without stopping.

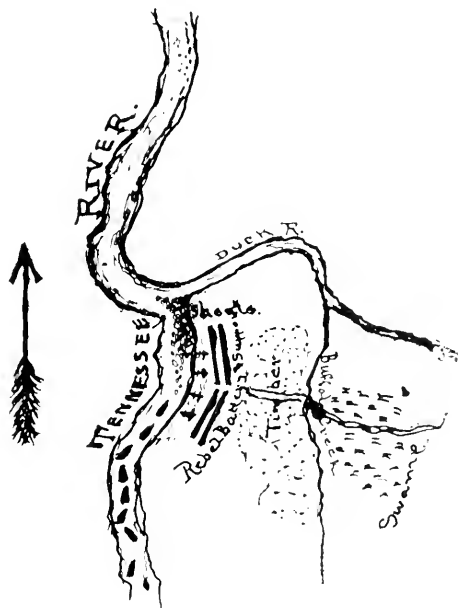


Diagram Showing Fleet Approaching Rebels in Position, at the Mouth of the Duck River, and Route of their Retreat.

About the time the Flag-ship *Atocrat* was fairly started in at the head of these shoals, she was suddenly saluted from the east shore, by a fire at short range, from a four gun battery, and with a rattling rain of bullets from the carbines of some five or six hundred dismounted cavalymen. The enemy's artillery was rapidly served, and their

small-arm fire was incessant. The Autocrat made instant response, and the DIANA and ADAMS, just in her rear, were quick to join the fray, while the Baltic with her rifled guns, from above, poured in upon the enemy a destructive, enfilading fire. The shores of the Tennessee echoed with the thunder of artillery and the roar of musketry, and the river itself was quickly overhung with a dense clond of sulphurous smoke. The Marine fire was heavy and accurate, and the enemy were more than once driven from their guns, but quickly rallying, continued their assault upon the descending boats until nearly all had arrived opposite.

As soon as the Autocrat reached the foot of the shoals, she sounded the whistle signal to land, and rounded to, and quickly began to send her troops ashore. In the meantime the enemy, perceiving the movement, limbered up in haste, and began a precipitate retreat. As soon as the Brigade could be disembarked, it was put in line, and began the pursuit. The character of the country, in this immediate locality, was such as to require that the greatest caution be exercised in following the enemy. Thick woods and miry, overgrown swamps, threaded by numerous winding roads, over which the enemy had passed and repassed, during several previous days, made it an ideal place for ambush, and difficult to determine the direction taken by the retreating foe. The advance was therefore at first necessarily slow. It soon appeared, however, that the enemy was in full retreat, and the pursuit was thenceforth pushed with great vigor. Several times the Marine cavalry overtook and had a brush with the rear guard of the escaping column, but could not force them to a stand. As the Confederate command, which was all mounted, largely outnumbered the Marine cavalry, and the Marine infantry was left far behind, the chase was abandoned at a point some twelve miles back from the river. The enemy left behind material evidence that summary punishment had been received by them, in return for their attack upon the boats. Four of their men were found dead on the shore where they fell; four more, including a Lieutenant, were killed, and one taken prisoner, during the pursuit. Four miles back from the river, Major White, of the Sixth Texas Rangers, was found in an abandoned house dying, from a wound in the breast; two ambulances full of wounded were driven away with the fleeing force; while num-



Battle at Duck River, on the Tennessee—Showing Attack upon the Brigade Boats by Rebel Artillery and Cavalry. Troops were Immediately Landed and Drove the Rebels 12 Miles Through the Swamps.

erous pools of blood found on the river bank, told sad tales of human mangling and pain.

The casualties in the Brigade were: two killed, viz. Sergeant Cavender of Co. H, Inf., and Private Winchell of Co. A, Cav.; the former on the ADAMS, and the latter on the AUTOCRAT; one seriously wounded, viz., Henry E. Young, whose foot was taken off by the same shell which killed Winchell, and who died in the Mound City Hospital, a few days later. Quite a number of others received wounds of a less serious nature, from flying splinters. Three horses were killed, three were badly injured on the DIANA, two were killed on the ADAMS, and one on the AUTOCRAT.

General Ellet's report of this action is included in that of the whole expedition, made on return of the fleet to Cairo, some days later, and is as follows:

Cairo, Ill., April 30, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir:—I have the honor to report that in compliance with instructions received from Admiral Porter, I proceeded with my command up Tennessee River to Eastport, Miss., without interruption from the enemy. Returning in consequence of low water, I made several raids into the country, and destroyed a number of important mills and considerable amount of subsistence and supplies belonging to the enemy. At the mouth of Duck River my boats were attacked by 700 cavalry with two [4] pieces of artillery, commanded by Major [R. M.] White, of the 6th Texas Rangers. The fight was spirited for a few moments only. The enemy were driven back and pursued some twelve miles in the interior, with the loss of Major White, mortally wounded and left near the field, and one lieutenant and eight men killed. They carried off a large number of wounded in wagons and on horses. We buried their dead. Our loss was two men killed and one wounded. The west bank of the Tennessee River was lined with refugees, who have been driven from their homes for love of the Old Union. I exhausted my supplies in providing for their necessities. The Tennessee River is too low for my boats to operate in with safety. My orders from Admiral Porter do not provide for the emergency. I shall hope to receive instructions from the Department.

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brig. Gen. Com'dg.

The appearance of the boats after the fight, bore testimony to the severity of the fire through which they had successfully passed. Capt. W. D. Crandall noted at the time: "Eight shells struck and penetrated the AUTOCRAT. Several passed through and then ex-

“exploded with a terrible crash, tearing up things, generally. One “struck the top casemating, passing entirely through the officers’ “mess-room, and exploded outside, the pieces tearing and smashing up “glassware, and scattering culinary implements, etc., at a lively rate. “Another, striking a little lower, passed entirely through and exploded “outside. Still another passed through below, killing a horse.” “The starboard side of the Flagship,” Captain Crandall added; “is “rather an interesting spectacle. Many parts of it, especially about “the pilot-house, are full of minie balls and canister shot; which had “not force enough to penetrate the oaken barricades, and hence did “no danger. Over eighty shots struck the pilot-house, and hardly a “pane of glass can now be seen on three sides of it.” The plating of boiler iron which lined the pilot-house on each of the boats, saved the men at the wheel. Col. Charles R. Ellet, Commanding the DIANA, reported her struck: “Six times with shot and shell, which passed “through the oaken barricade without difficulty, while the grape, “canister, and minie balls, were very generally arrested by the out- “side plank.” This boat’s guns replied to the enemy’s battery, double shotted with canister.

Several interesting experiences, during this fight, are on record. Captain Crandall, Assistant Adjutant General, in a letter written soon after, says: “While I was just inside my office, reloading my “carbine from cartridges which I kept in a box there, a percussion “shell struck the outer casemating but a few feet forward of the spot, “and passed through bursting at the same instant. The shock was “terrific, and the flash almost blinding; but the pieces all passed into “the wheel-house, literally riddling a space several feet square. “Lieutenant Dean’s dress coat was hanging in his stateroom on the “ADAMS. Both sleeves from the elbow down, together with the lower “half of the waist, and all the skirt, were neatly sheared off by a shell. “It was fortunate for the Lieutenant that he was not inside that coat, “just then.” Sergeant John Spilman, Co. B Inf., in his diary of that date says: “There was a Company A, Inf. boy, whose name I “do not remember, who stood about twenty feet on my right, and the “shell which killed Winchell and wounded Young, took off about one- “third of his bayonet and scabbard, without hurting him.”

Captain C. G. Fisher of Co. E Inf., wrote: “While our cavalry

"was still pursuing the enemy, which we learned contained a regiment whose Colonel lived on the road, we (the infantry) were ordered to halt, and await the General's return, as he having chased them some eleven miles had concluded to turn back. The halt was made in front of the rebel Colonel's house, as we soon learned. We also learned that it had been expected to hold something of a jubilee there if they captured the Yankees. The Colonel's wife came to the gate, and complained that our men were not only robbing her smoke-house, but were intruding into the house. Colonel Currie instructed me to keep the men from the house, but not to mind the smoke-house. As the boys had marched ten or eleven miles without food, and must return to the boats before they could get rations, the smoke-house order seemed to me a good one, and I obeyed it strictly."

General Ellet visited the house where the wounded Major White lay, and without knowing his delirious condition asked him how many there were of the attacking force. In his delirium, and seeming to address his own command, Major White called out, "Hurry up men—for God's sake, hurry!—There are twenty thousand of them."

The attacking party was a part of Morgan's force, under command of Colonel Woodford. They were drawn out from in front of Rosecrans, and sent hither for the express purpose of attacking the Marine Brigade, on its return down the Tennessee. John D. McClain of Co. F Inf. says: "In '65 I came across one of the 'Johnnies' returning home, and after talking with him some time, he remarked that the worst his command was ever sold out, was in an attack on what they supposed were cattle-boats [transports]; and further inquiry revealed the fact that he referred to the Duck river fight, with the Marine Brigade."

In his Naval History, Admiral Porter says, respecting the state of things, and this expedition, up the Tennessee river: "During the war bitterness and treachery flourished in Tennessee, owing to their guerrilla system. In some parts of the state almost every family had one or more of these quasi-soldiers, belonging to a gang whose occupation was firing on unarmed steamers, and seldom or ever even when supported by artillery, making a successful stand against the light gunboats called 'tin clads'. Now and then they would receive severe punishment, and some of them get killed; occasionally when

overtaken, they were summarily dealt with. Such was the condition of affairs when Brig. Gen. Ellet with the Marine Brigade entered the Tennessee in five steamers admirably equipped for the accommodation of the men, and united with Lieut. Commander Fitch to suppress the guerrillas. . . . The Confederates were much surprised at the advent of the Marine Brigade, who were gunboat men and soldiers at the same time, and could land fifteen hundred troops, with field artillery, at a moment's notice, to pursue the enemy. In fact when Fitch and Ellet "confederated," they made short work of the Confederates, who had really been a scourge to both parties in Tennessee. General Ellet's command included cavalry, with which he made night marches to pounce on the camps of the guerrillas, and destroy the stores on which these marauders relied for subsistence. The Marine Brigade also co-operated with General Dodge, and afforded material assistance in breaking up the command of the Confederate General Cox, some eighteen miles above Savannah on the Tennessee. General Ellet's command was not popular with the Confederate inhabitants; as the former did not trouble themselves much about the "amenities of war". They saw so many irregularities committed by the enemy, that they retaliated, in many instances by destroying the property of disloyal persons, and often returned from an expedition with sufficient stores captured from the enemy to last them a month."

For some days subsequent to the Duck river fight, the fleet remained in the vicinity of Fort Henry, scouting the country on both sides, and hoping for a rise in the river, sufficient to enable them again to move up stream. The General ran out in one of the tenders to Cairo, and returned hoping still to be able to move up with the fleet. But the river continued to fall, and finally the fleet went out of the Tennessee, reaching Cairo on the 7th of May. On his arrival at this place, General Ellet sent Secretary Stanton the following:

Cairo, Ill., May 7, 1863. 1 p. m.

E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: I have just returned from an attempt to ascend the Tennessee River a second time. The water is too low for me to get above the mouth of Duck River. I am now repairing damages that my boats sustained in the dangerous navigation. My orders from Admiral Porter confine me to the Tennessee River, making no provision for the present condition of the water. I can not

communicate with the Admiral without great delay. Will you advise me what course to pursue?

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Brig. Gen. Com'dg Marine Brigade.

While awaiting reply from the Secretary of War, the Command was mustered for pay, the damage done the boats up Tennessee river was repaired, and the fleet was coaled and provisioned, and on the 17th, by its movements, anticipating the following order, the Brigade again started down the Mississippi:

Washington, D. C., 4:05 p. m., May 20, 1863.

Brigadier General Ellet, Cairo, Ill.:—

The Secretary of War thinks that such of your boats as may be available and not required in the Cumberland and Tennessee, should proceed immediately to Vicksburg.

H. W. HALLECK.

Upon the return of the command from the Tennessee the *Monarch* had been sent below, and was now engaged in patrol work, subject to the orders of General Washburn, at Memphis. On the 14th she was directed to a special duty, by the following order, which occasioned quite a controversy between Washburn and Porter, as to who had the right to control the policing of the river—a question evidently determined in favor of the Admiral. Here is the order:

Headquarters District of West Tennessee, Memphis, Tenn., May 11, 1864.
General Order No. 4.

* * * The ram *Monarch* will proceed tomorrow morning down the Mississippi River and arrest every trading boat found between Memphis and White River. All passengers on board who are women and children, or all persons not liable to conscription by the laws of the Confederate states, will be put ashore at the first landing together with any effects they may have; and parties liable to conscription are presumed to be in the rebel army, and will be brought as prisoners of war to this city.

The commander of the ram *Monarch* will send each boat to this city under guard which will be furnished by Brigadier General Buckland, and no boat will be allowed to land except at Helena on the way up.

By order of Maj. Gen. C. C. Washburn,

W. H. MORGAN.

A. A. G.

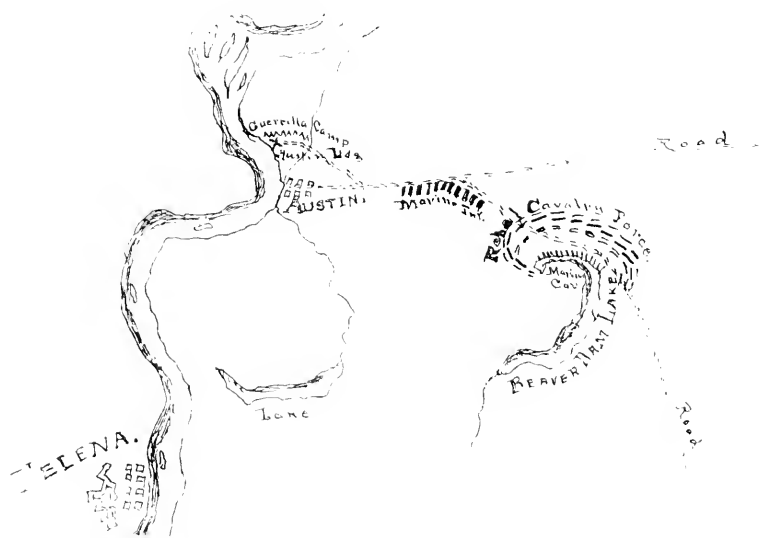
On the 9th of this month Captain Sutherland, who had been assigned to Co. B, Inf., and was absent sick at Flemingsburg, Ky., resigned. On June 15th, he wrote Col. Chas. R. Ellet of the place

being raided by rebels, under Colonel Breckenridge, and that he (having advised citizens to defend against raiders) only escaped their vengeance by the intercessions of his wife, and by accepting a parole, which, however, he intended to treat as a nullity and rejoin his command as soon as able to travel. It does not appear, however, that he ever did so.

Nothing of importance occurred on the down trip, until the afternoon of the 23rd. After the boats had anchored at Helena for the night, the Quartermaster boat, FAIRCHILD, which had fallen behind the rest of the fleet, also came to anchor and reported having been fired upon at Austin, a small village above, on the Mississippi shore. On the afternoon of the same day, at the same point, a small trading boat, --the *Bostonia*--had first been robbed and then burned, and its crew all taken prisoners, by the Confederate guerrillas. When General Ellet heard, in the middle of the night, of the attack made at Austin upon one of his own boats, and of the other depredations committed in close connection therewith, he at once directed that the *BALTIMORE*, with the *FAIRCHILD*, and the *RAIXE*, the *LIONESS* and *FULTON* proceed the next morning to the mouth of White river, while he, raising steam on the other boats immediately started back up the river (2 o'clock a. m. of the 24th) for the punishment of the offenders. Austin was reached about sunrise, and everything seemed innocently peaceful and quiet. The guerilla force was reported as having retired some distance to the rear. The Marine troops were at once disembarked, and the four cavalry companies, under command of Major Hubbard, promptly moved out in the advance. A portion of the infantry, under Captain Newell, was left to guard the boats, while the remainder landed, but were delayed a little, from some cause, in getting away.

The cavalry advance soon reached a point where the road divided into two branches, and choosing the right hand road, passed on, in a southeasterly direction. Supposing that they were closely followed by the infantry, they did not consider a rear guard necessary, nor did they take the precaution to leave a picket at the forks of the road, to inform the infantry as to the direction they had gone. It turned out that at the time the fleet landed at Austin, the Confederates--some seven or eight hundred mounted men, with two pieces of artillery--

were in camp at a landing about three miles above the town. When they heard of the arrival of the Brigade, they began a retreat, along a road which ran diagonally southeast from their camp, passing in rear of Austin, and coming into the main highway at the forks of the main road already described. The Confederates came down this diagonal road and into the main road, soon after the Marine cavalry advance had passed, and were eagerly pushing forward for their capture. After pursuing the right hand road some distance, Major Hubbard became satisfied that the enemy were not in his front, and was just countermarching his battalion, near the upper end of Beaver Dam Lake, intending to return and take the other fork of the road, when the head of the Confederate column opened an unexpected fire



**Diagram Showing Position of Forces in Marine Cavalry Fight at Beaver Dam Lake.
Infantry Finally Arrived, and Rebels Withdrew.**

upon his little force. Doubled up in their countermarch, as the Marine cavalry were, it was like a rattling shotgun fire into a bunched flock of quails. The volley was so sudden and fierce, that for a moment it threw the battalion into confusion, and drove them off the road. When they dismounted and lined up, which they quickly did,

they found themselves in a little sunken bend of a bayou, with a few cypress trees and low bushes in their front, and with an impassable stream of water at their backs. The enemy, in the meantime, had also formed a line on the opposite side, and across the road, in a thick canebrake, with their right touching the bayou, and thus almost inclosing the Marine cavalry. The enemy then sent in a demand for surrender, but Major Hubbard, furious as a desert lion stirred up in his lair, and with one of his customary italicized and punctuated expressions, replied that he never would surrender, and at once the fight was on.

Time after time the enemy charged on foot, out of the canebrake, and across the intervening space, approaching so near the Marine line that the Confederate officers could be distinctly heard urging their men forward, with oaths and threats, only to receive a murderous carbine fire, which drove them back into their canebrake covert. Fortunately for the Marines, although the Confederates played their artillery, they did not sufficiently depress their guns, and the shots from them went harmlessly over the heads of the beleaguered battalion. The battle continued for about an hour, and then the word went up to Major Hubbard that the ammunition was nearly exhausted. But the Major bareheaded, with sabre in one hand and revolver in the other, moved along the line encouraging the men, and cautioning them to hold their fire until they were sure of doing execution. At this critical juncture one of the Marines went to Major Hubbard and offered, if permitted to exchange his uniform for some of the "butter-nut" clothing of one of the prisoners already captured, and to swim the bayou, and pilot the infantry to the place.

While things were thus at the front, there was something going on also at the rear. General Ellet and his staff, with three or four orderlies galloped forward to overtake the advance, and reached the forks of the road just after the enemy had passed. Their rear guard, seeing the General's small party approaching, drew aside into a clump of bushes, and awaited its coming. When about a hundred yards distant they opened upon it with a heavy volley, but though several horses were hit and disabled, not one of the party was injured. The enemy galloped away at once, uninjured by the small arms fire the party sent after them. The infantry was now hurried

up, and learning from a Marine messenger, of the painful situation of the cavalry, and piloted by this messenger, the General pushed forward with the infantry column as rapidly as possible, at length reaching the Confederate rear guard and driving it before him. Thus, less than an hour's rapid march, brought the infantry upon the scene of action. At his coming, however, the enemy mounted their horses, limbered up their artillery, and precipitately fled. The enemy's force being all mounted, and the Marine cavalry being much cut up, and out of ammunition, it was impossible to pursue or overtake the fleeing force.

The Confederates were Chalmer's command, consisting of eight hundred mounted men, with two pieces of artillery. Their own account of this engagement (as given to disguised Union scouts, operating in the rear of Austin, along the Coldwater River) was as follows: "We had a very severe battle, and came near losing our two pieces [of artillery] but finally cut our way out. We lost seven killed, including a Colonel, thirty wounded, and twenty missing." The following is the enemy's official report, as rendered by General Chalmers to General Johnston:

Panola, Miss., May 26, 1863.

General Johnston:

Col. W. P. Slemmons, with the Second Arkansas Cavalry and Second Mississippi Partisans, fired on transports near Austin, without effect. The enemy landed from three transports and were repulsed, leaving 18 dead horses. Their loss is unknown—ours one captain and two men killed, twelve wounded and three missing.

JAMES R. CHALMERS,

Brigadier General.

P. S. I have just learned that the force that fought Slemmons was Ellet's Mounted Marine Brigade, enroute to Vicksburg—seven transport loads.

J. R. C.

The Marine loss in men was two killed, viz., Battalion Bugler Christian, and Charles Hager, both of Co. A Cav.; one man dangerously, and twenty more or less severely, wounded; and in horses, three killed and nineteen shot and more or less injured. The Marines also captured three prisoners and twenty-two stands of arms. The soldier before mentioned as "severely wounded" was Henry N. Conden of Co. D, Cav., subsequently and for many years (even to the time of this writing) Chaplain of the National House of Representatives. It is

not necessary to say that he was "conspicuous" in this fight, when it is known that he received a charge of small shot in the face, which immediately deprived him forever of the sight of both eyes. He also received a ball in his left arm, another in his side, and still another in his foot, while his horse was riddled with eight bullets.

But to this day Captain Newell insists that all the work of that day, was not at the front, and that he had a small portion of it, though of an entirely different kind, back at the river. He says: "Much to my disappointment at the time, I was left with my own company, and a small detail on each boat, to guard the fleet during the absence of the command. General Ellet had reason to suspect that the enemy might try to swing round into his rear, and make an attack upon the boats, and I was instructed to watch and be ready for them if they came. Accordingly as soon as the command left, I threw out pickets, issued orders to the sailing masters to hoist the large gangways, spar the boats out a little from the shore, and keep up sufficient steam to move the boats, and have the hot-water-hose on each boat connected, so that we might play hot water on any force attempting to board us. To while away the time, I permitted the men to go up into the town, in small squads. But I soon discovered that they were coming back 'in good spirits.' Suspecting the cause I went out to meet some of them as they came in from the village, and found one fellow with a two quart pail full of 'old rye,' which I confiscated and poured out on the ground. Still, with all my watchfulness, I did not seem able to 'stop the traffic' until finally I noticed that one of the men, just relieved from guard, came carrying his gun in a peculiar way. I ordered the relief to halt, and upon inspection of their guns found that in some cases the charges had been withdrawn, the nipples plugged, and the barrels partly filled with 'the fluid.' This was proof positive, that our Marines were quick to accommodate themselves to any surroundings in which they might chance to be. Before leaving, the General had instructed me to 'carefully search all the houses, since he had good reason to believe that medicines and hospital stores were finding their way through this town, into the Confederate lines. I shall never forget my experience in executing the General's order. I tried to conduct the search of houses in such manner as might be least offensive to the

"women in the homes. I took with me a sergeant and two guards. "Going into the houses, I would tell the occupants what I came for, and give the woman of the house the privilege of going with us, and, "under my direction opening the bureaus, trunks, beds, etc., promising "that if she would do this we would withhold our hands from her "possessions; otherwise we would make the search ourselves and in our "own way. In most cases the women appreciated this offer, and complied with it. But in some cases they refused the courtesy, and in "one or two cases well nigh spit in our faces. It required a good deal "of self-control to stand this, and more than once I wished myself with "the main part of the Command, facing the husbands, sons, brothers "and lovers of these Amazons. The search, however, revealed nothing "of importance, and no considerable capture of contraband stores was "made.

When the General returned with the command he issued to Captain Newell, as Provost Marshal of the Brigade an order, directing that the town of Austin be burned. "With a sad heart," says Newell, "but with a loyal soldier's spirit of obedience, I executed this order, "to the very letter. The memory of this incident is one of the most "unpleasant of all my war experiences. In the midst of the conflagra- "tion, there was a terrific explosion, and upon investigation, it was "found to have occurred in the cellar or basement of the Court House, "where there was probably a quantity of Confederate ammunition, "overlooked in the search."

Having thus disposed of Austin, and severely punished and driven away the hostile force which made it their headquarters, the fleet returned, the evening of the same day, to Helena. Here the General's report of the battle at Beaver Dam Lake was made. It is here given in full, in order that his commendation of the gallantry of the Marine cavalry, in this their first single handed combat with the enemy, may fully appear:

Helena, Ark., May 29, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that as my command was descending the river from Memphis on the evening of May 23, the commissary and quartermaster boat was fired into from the Mississippi side by a band of the enemy with two pieces of artillery, about 6 miles above Austin. I returned yesterday morning to Austin and landed my force. The enemy

had a few hours before my arrival captured a small trading steamer, and burned her, taking her crew captive, and appropriating her freight. I could obtain no intelligence from the inhabitants by which to guide my movements. My cavalry, under the command of Maj. Hubbard, 200 strong, came up with the enemy, 1,000 strong, all mounted, 8 miles out. The fight lasted nearly two hours. The Major was compelled to take shelter in a favorable bottom, where he succeeded in repulsing the enemy and finally drove them off, before the infantry could come to his relief. Our loss was 2 killed and 19 wounded, mostly slight. The enemy left 5 dead upon the field, and 1 lieutenant mortally wounded, and 22 stands of arms. We captured 3 prisoners. I burned the town of Austin, having first searched every building. As the fire progressed, the discharge of loaded fire arms was like volleys of musketry as the fire reached their hiding places, and two heavy explosions of powder also occurred. Of Major Hubbard and his battalion I can not speak too highly. They are deserving all praise. Every officer and man of the little force is reported to have acted with the most distinguished bravery, and prompt obedience to orders.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Brigadier General.

The county records of Tunica County, Miss., which were brought away from Austin, for preservation, were here turned over to General Prentiss. There was now some apprehension of attack by the enemy upon that place from the rear, and some skirmishing had occurred during the day, the Brigade remained at anchor, off the town, until half past four p. m., when all danger of a general assault being over, the Brigade proceeded down stream. While at anchor off Helena, General Ellet also sent the following to Washington:

Flag Ship Autocrat, Helena, Ark., May 25, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: I have the honor to request that another regiment of infantry be added to my command. I find from experience that my force is too small, and entirely insufficient to head against the enemy I have to contend with in the field, and at the same time provide for the safety of my boats. If permitted to choose I would ask that the Thirty-third Regiment Ill. Vols., Col. Charles E. Lippincott, commanding, be added to the Marine Brigade. No additional boats will be required for this increase of the command.

ALFRED W. ELLET.

Brigadier General.

The mouth of White river was reached at half past two a. m., of the 26th, and the *BALTIC* and *FAREHOLD* which had been sent ahead,

were found awaiting the coming of the rest of the fleet. While lying at this point, the previous day, Major Tallerdav did some scouting in the adjacent country, capturing some stock. And now, while waiting for the boats to take on coal, Companies A and B Inf., went out on a scout, on the Mississippi side, from which they returned bringing some horses, mules, and other minor captures. While lying at this place some four thousand five hundred Confederate prisoners were brought up from below, and proceeded to Memphis. Nothing of further interest occurred on the run down stream, and about sunrise on the 29th the boats reached Young's Point. Thus ended one of the most eventful and stirring expeditions in the history of the Command.



CHAPTER III

June 1863

Grant's Army Now Around Vicksburg. Marine Brigade Sent to Hold Haines' Bluff.—Pemberton's Precautions.—Fleet off to Memphis for Reinforcements for Grant. In Skirmish Near Richmond. Artillery Duel on the Tensas. Planting of Marine Battery Opposite Vicksburg. Record and Effect of the Gunnery. Brigade Called to Goodrich's. A Sharp Encounter.—Death of Captain Wright. Admiral Riled by Newspaper Correspondents. Surrender of Vicksburg. Army and Navy Celebrating the Glorious Fourth Within Its Gates.

During the time intervening between the departure of the Brigade upon its Tennessee river expedition and its return, the military situation had greatly changed. Grant had found his way below Vicksburg, and crossed his troops over to the east side of the river, and with the help of the Navy had taken Grand Gulf, and after his succession of splendid victories below and in the rear, of Vicksburg, had drawn his cordon around that doomed, but defiant stronghold.

Under date of May 29th, 1863, the date of the fleet's return to Vicksburg from the Tennessee river, Capt. W. D. Crandall, Assistant Adjutant General wrote of the situation:

"The city is still in a state of close siege. This afternoon I crossed over with some officers, to the opposite side of the neck, and we went up and down the levee looking at the rebel guns, batteries, and men, and noting the general appearance of the city. We could distinctly hear the firing of field pieces and muskets back of the city, all the way around; at times light, and at times very heavy. We know our men are slowly closing in upon the ill-starred city. Toward evening General Sherman's command, on the right, which holds

"all the approaches from Haines' Bluff, had a severe artillery fight with the rebels, in position very close to him. We could see, with our field glasses, the guns of both sides belching their deadly fire at each other, but could not note the effect. Neither battery left its position, though the rebels ceased firing, two or three times, during the hour. While I write, the mortars are shelling the city from the upper side of the point, and the shell-guns from the boats below, are also firing heavily, upon the rebel batteries and the town. The enemy's big guns have a very accurate range upon the point. I saw one spot yesterday, near where the mortars are anchored, about two hundred yards square, which had not less than ten shells dropped in it. Each one tore up the earth, exploding and making almost a grave."

Immediately upon its arrival the Brigade was again summoned to service. On the 29th, the day it reached the bend above Vicksburg, General Grant made the following request of Admiral Porter:

Lake's Landing, Miss., May 29, 1863.

Rear Admiral David D. Porter, Com'dg Miss. Squadron:

Will you have the goodness to order the Marine Brigade to Haines' Bluff, with directions to disembark and remain in occupation, until I can relieve them by other troops? I have also to request that you put at the disposal of Major Lyford, Chief of Ordinance, two siege guns, ammunition and implements complete, to be planted in the rear of Vicksburg. After they are in battery, and ready for use, I should be pleased to have them manned by crews from your fleet.

U. S. GRANT,

Major-General.

Admiral Porter at once sent General Ellet an order, in line with this request, and before noon of the 30th the Marine fleet was at Haines' Bluff. Outposts were at once established, and the command was in readiness to co-operate with General Sherman.

Grant had recently, somewhat weakened the line in that place, by sending Blair's Division on a special expedition up the Yazoo, to drive out the enemy, and gather supplies and forage. He speaks of this in his *Memoirs*, and [at 544 Vol. 2] refers to the services of the Brigade above mentioned, in these terms of appreciation:

"I requested Porter at this time to send the Marine Brigade, a floating nondescript force, which had been assigned to his command,

"and which proved very useful, up to Haines' Bluff, to hold it until reinforcements could be sent."

The coming of the Marine Brigade upon the scene seems to have awakened considerable apprehension in the minds of the Confederate Commanders, as may be seen from the following:

Headquarters Dept. of Miss. and East La., Vicksburg, May 29, 1863.

Brig. Gen. John S. Bowen, Commanding Division, Vicksburg:

General: The Lieutenant General Commanding directs that you move Brigadier General Green's Brigade to such point that it may support Sterling's battery, upon our river front, which is now threatened with an attack from Ellet's Marine Brigade. You will direct the movement yourself.

Very respectfully,

H. C. TUTTLE,

Aid de Camp.

Headquarters Dept. Miss. and East La., Vicksburg, May 29, 1863.

Gen. Martin L. Smith, Commanding, etc.: -

General: I am directed by the Lieutenant General Commanding to say it is probable that Ellet's Marine Brigade- just come down the river- may endeavor to assault Hadley's battery, on your left. He desires that you have a regiment in readiness to move to that point, promptly, in case such assault should be made.

Your obedient servant,

R. W. MEMMINGER.

A. A. G.

General Smith, for reply to the above, requests that the 17th La. be returned to his Brigade, for the purpose indicated, and receives from Pemberton's Headquarters the following:

Headquarters Dept. Miss. and East La., Vicksburg, May 29, 1863.

Gen. Martin L. Smith:

General: The Lieutenant General Commanding directs me to advise you that he has ordered the 17th La. Regiment to be thrown on your right, in order to support you, in case of an attack on you by Sherman, in conjunction with Ellet's Marine Brigade, which the movements of the enemy in the river render probable.

I am, respectfully, etc.,

W. H. MCCARDLE.

A. A. G.

That Pemberton, even thus early, began to feel the tightening of the cords which Grant had drawn about him, is clearly evident from this extract from his dispatch to Johnston, of this date, May 29:

" Sherman on my left, McPherson and McClelland on my right, and Hurlbut, from Memphis, and Ellet's Marine Brigade, "(the last afloat). . . . Since investment we have lost about ten thousand men and many officers. . . . "

But the Marines were not long to remain with Sherman. On the 31st Blair's troops reached Haines' Bluff, and orders came from Admiral Porter relieving the Brigade from longer holding their position at this point. It was apprehended that the Confederates would move heaven and earth to save Vicksburg, and Grant was in dire need of all the forces that could possibly be spared and gotten to him, in order to resist the force of the enemy in his rear should he advance before the fall of the city. Large numbers of reinforcements were being hurried forward, from northern points, but the means of transportation below were insufficient. Again General Grant seeks the help of the Marine Brigade, sending the following request to Admiral Porter:

Near Vicksburg, Miss., May 31, 1863.

Rear Admiral David D. Porter, Commanding Miss. Squadron:—

Will you please direct the Marine Brigade to debark at Haines' Bluff, and send all their steamers, or as many of them as possible, to Memphis, to bring down re-inforcements? I have ordered the troops, but it is a difficult matter to get transportation. I would especially request that any of these steamers that can be spared be got off at the earliest possible moment.

U. S. GRANT,

Major General.

About this time, and probably with special view to creating a harrassing diversion, and retard reinforcements from above, guerrilla attacks became frequent, and were evidently directed by those who knew where these desultory attacks would be most effective. The Marine Brigade could at this time have done its best work, in the line for which it was designed, but the exigencies of the service, for the time diverted it to the transporting of reinforcements to Grant's army.

Among the rebel archives is found a recommendation, urged by Maj. Gen. Buckner, during the siege, that the guerrilla forces operating along the river above, be armed with the new Whitworth rifles and 20 lb. Parrott guns, for greater efficiency; and supported by cavalry in the Tunica Hills, which, said he: "will prevent the Marine Brigade from landing troops, and drive off the tin-clads."

This order came to General Ellet, from Admiral Porter, June 1st, at 3 o'clock a. m., and an hour and a half later, the fleet was under steam, at the mouth of the Yazoo, awaiting orders in detail, and making the necessary preparations, and at 8 o'clock next morning the fleet was under way for Memphis. The only noteworthy incident of the up-bound trip, was a brief stop at Helena, on the 3d, where Private Jacob Burr of Co. E, Inf. was buried, from the *DIANA*. The *AUTOCRAT* and *DIANA* reached Memphis about noon of the 3d, the rest of the fleet coming on later in the day.

On the 5th, while awaiting the arrival of troops from Corinth, the Marine Cavalry was sent out into Arkansas, opposite Memphis. General Ellet gives the result of this scout, in his report to Admiral Porter, from which we take an extract:

Flag Ship *Autocrat*, Above Vicksburg, June 15, 1863.

Admiral David D. Porter, Commanding Miss. Squadron:

Admiral:— I have the honor to report that in accordance with your instructions, received on the morning of the 1st instant, I proceeded without any delay, with six boats belonging to my fleet, to Memphis, Tenn., and reported to Major General Hurlbut, commanding that District. General Hurlbut informed me that there were no troops in his command waiting transportation, but he at once telegraphed to the Department at Washington for instructions. Finding that I was to be detained some days, I landed my troops on the Arkansas shore, and sent my cavalry, under command of Major Hubbard, into the interior with instructions to proceed as far as Marion, on a scout for the enemy and in search of smuggled goods. The Major was very successful in his search. He captured seven prisoners, and a captain of the Confederate Army, several privates, the balance recruits; also three large wagons, loaded with smuggled goods, consisting of five barrels of gun-caps, five large dry goods boxes filled with stationery, several trunks of dry goods, and medicines, boxes of spool cotton, military buttons, star candles, etc., etc. A number of papers were also obtained showing that a very large contraband business of this kind has been carried on from this direction undisturbed. * * *

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brig. Gen. Com'dg M. M. Brigade.

The troops to be carried down the river having arrived, a portion of them, together with a considerable number of prominent disloyal citizens of St. Louis, being exiled and sent South by order of General Schofield, were embarked on the Marine boats, on the 8th, and during the forenoon of the 9th, and at 4:30 p. m. of the 9th, the fleet started

down stream. Among the exiled parties mentioned, were Mrs. Polk, wife of General Trusten Polk, with her two daughters, and a Mrs. Welsh and daughter. The first three were quartered on the *Atocrat*, and the last two on the *Raine*. The instructions given General Ellet respecting these "passengers" were, to put them ashore at Greenville, Miss., but when that place was reached it was a dark, and very stormy night, and the General, ever noted for his gallantry, could not find it in his heart to send a company of women, however disloyal they might be, out from the comfort and shelter of his cabins, and set them down on the lonely shore, to make their way as best they might amidst the darkness and storm, to the nearest habitation: so he took them on down to Young's Point. From there, at the request of Admiral Porter, General Grant disposed of them by sending them, on the gunboat *Rattler*, to Sartatia, on Yazoo River.

While at Memphis, orders were received which deprived the fleet henceforth of the services of its valued Signal Corps detachment. Of the efficiency of this detachment, and the signal system and its relation to our fleet we shall speak more fully in another place.

Helena was reached at 10 o'clock p. m., of the 9th, and off this place the boats lay at anchor until daylight the next morning. At nine o'clock a. m. of the 11th, the fleet reached Young's Point, and touched there long enough to learn where the troops on board were to be disembarked.

Learning that they were to be taken to Haines' Bluff, the three boats bringing them were ordered to proceed to that point. The rest of the fleet stopped below at Chickasaw Bayou. From this point General Ellet and staff, while awaiting the return of the three boats, visited General Grant, in rear of Vicksburg.

Some time previous to this, the enemy had made an attack on Milliken's Bend, but were repulsed by the colored troops garrisoning the place. They did not, however, leave the vicinity, until they had first devastated most of the plantations round about. And hence, when, on the 13th, the Marine cavalry was sent out from Young's Point, and came back reporting the enemy in considerable force at Richmond, La., an expedition against them was at once planned. In this projected movement the Marine Brigade was to co-operate with General Mower's Brigade. The plan agreed upon was that Mower,

with his force, should proceed direct from Young's Point toward Richmond, while the Marine Brigade, moving up to Milliken's Bend and there disembarking, should march out, and join General Mower at a point where the roads from Young's Point and Milliken's Bend come together—three miles from Richmond. The movement of the two commands, to be associated in this expedition, was to begin on the 14th. While waiting the set time, on the evening of the 13th, General Ellet sent for Captain Newell of Co. A, Inf., and proposed a plan "for a little amusement," on the following day.

This plan was, to arm a few men, selected from Co. A with Spencer rifles, and going down to the point, opposite Vicksburg, see if it were not possible to reach across the river with the rifles, and at least do something in the way of harrassing the enemy.

Accordingly, that evening, Admiral Porter's Flagship was visited by tug and the rifles obtained, though in lending them the Admiral laughingly said: He guessed the place would be found so hot that they would not be fired very often. Early the next morning, quite a while before day-break, the General, with some of the members of his staff, the Captain of Co. A, with a small squad of his men, and half a dozen deck-hands with picks and shovels, went down upon the point, directly opposite Vicksburg. The first move, on reaching the place, was to have the deck-hands dig a large, square pit, behind and partly under the levee, after which the negro deck-hands, frightened nearly out of their wits, because of their proximity to the water batteries on the other side of the river, were dismissed and told to double quick for the fleet. It should be explained that for their entire water supply the rebels in the trenches, around the beleaguered city, were dependent upon carts which brought the water from the river. These carts, many in number, were strong, heavy vehicles, upon each of which, lying on its side, lengthwise between the wheels, was fastened a big, ironbound cask. These casks each had a large funnel on top, to facilitate filling, and a hose attached to the rear head, through which they could be quickly emptied. As usual, and without suspecting any danger, about daylight these carts, in long lines, came down upon the Vicksburg side, and were backed into the river, to be filled. Under General Ellet's direction, and as a matter of prudence, the little force concealed from view behind the levee had been divided into two

squads, one of which went below, and the other some distance above and at a given signal, began firing rapidly, with their repeating rifles, upon the drivers of the water carts. The effect was immediate. The terrified drivers gathering up their lines, and lashing their horses, hastened to get out of range. Such a rattling of carts, mingled with shouts and curses, was perhaps never heard there before. This was an "eye-opener" to the enemy. To have his water supply endangered was a new peril. Presently the "long roll" was beaten, all along the line of shore batteries, and the gunners all hastened to their places. Knowing what was to be expected, the Marines now dropped out of sight behind the levee, and making for the square hole jumped down into it, and held their breath for immediately, a terrific cannonading was opened along the entire line of water batteries. This fire however, as the General had foreseen, was concentrated on the two points from which the Marines had done their firing. During the heavy rain of shot and shell, which continued for about a half hour, the devoted little band of Federals nestled in their hole, and speculated on the final outcome. Over and over again during the day, when the batteries ceased, and any of the carts re-appeared, this scene was re-enacted. In the lull between these episodes, the Marines could distinctly hear the Confederate gunners berating them with oaths and insulting epithets, and daring them to come out and show themselves. But of course the Marines were not to be badgered into revealing their place of covert, and hence all escaped, at the end of the day, with whole skins. This experiment led up to something of more importance in the same direction a few days later, an account of which will be given further along.

According to the previously arranged plan for the expedition against Richmond, La., on the night of the 14th, the Marine fleet proceeded to Milliken's Bend, and at 4 a. m. of the 15th, the Brigade was in line, and began its march. At 10 a. m. the junction with General Mower was effected.

After a short rest for the men, and a brief consultation between the two commanders, the Marine cavalry took the advance, and was soon having a lively time with the enemy. A part of the artillery was ordered up, and opening fire was briskly responded to by the enemy's guns. The Confederates were, however, finally dislodged, and fell

back to another position. The Union forces were now deployed, and all their ten pieces of artillery were brought into play, the enemy at the same time making good use of their four pieces. A flank movement, executed by the Union infantry, completely discomfited the Confederates, and they retired across a bridge spanning the bayou, and set it on fire to prevent further pursuit. The fire however, was extinguished, and a sufficient force crossed to pick up stragglers, etc. The engagement was principally an artillery duel, and was soon over. The casualties on the Union side were one killed and eight wounded. The Confederate loss, so far as known, was one killed, ten wounded, and ten taken prisoners. The Marines returned to their boats the same night, and General Mower's command to Young's Point, the next day, after having destroyed the most of the town. The following is Admiral Porter's report of this affair, to the Secretary of the Navy:

U. S. Mississippi Squadron, Flag Ship Blackhawk,
Near Vicksburg, June 18, 1863.

Hon. G. D. Welles, Secretary of the Navy:

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that, hearing the enemy had collected a force of 12,000 men at Richmond, La., nine miles from Milliken's Bend, I sent General Ellet (M. M. Brigade) to General Mower, at Young's Point, to act in conjunction to break them up. General Mower promptly acceded to the request, and with about 1,200 men, in company with the Marine Brigade, Gen. A. W. Ellet commanding, proceeded to Richmond, where they completely routed the advance guard of the rebels, consisting of 4,000 men and six pieces of artillery, captured a lot of stores, and the town was completely destroyed in the melee. This duty was handsomely performed by the different parties concerned in it. I inclose Brigadier General Ellet's report.

Very respectfully,

D. D. PORTER,
Commanding Mississippi Squadron.

An "unpleasantness" arose about this time, over some anonymous newspaper correspondence, touching operations on the Mississippi, by which the Admiral's pride had evidently been wounded, and his sensitiveness needlessly touched. In May or June preceding, some such communications appeared in the St. Louis and Memphis papers, in which General Ellet was praised for his celerity of movement, and his readiness for fight, and Admiral Porter was censured for his over-caution and tardiness. These communications were written on sheets

of General Ellet's Headquarter paper, evidently surreptitiously obtained and used, by some enlisted man of the command, as they gave evidence on their face of being the productions of some veritable tyro. The Admiral was soon in high dudgeon, and sent the following letter—as found recently printed in the War Records, without either “the inclosure” or the General's reply:

ADMIRAL PORTER'S LETTER TO GENERAL ELLET.

U. S. Miss, Squadron, Flag Ship, Black Hawk, June 20, 1863.

J. W. Ellet, Brig. Gen. Miss, Marine Brigade:—

General:— I inclose you a letter taken from the *Memphis Bulletin* of June 15th, dated from your ship, the *Autocrat*, off Young's Point.

But for the heading, I should not think this letter worthy of any notice, though every commander should be jealous of any imputations of the kind. I do not suppose that you will feel very well pleased at having such a letter from your headquarters, complimentary as it is to you and your command. Your services are so well known that you can afford to dispense with praise, coming in such a shape. I do not know that such an individual as “J. J. B.” exists. It may be a *nom deguerre*, but I trust that you will take such steps in relation to this matter as your own sense of propriety will dictate, to put a stop, if possible, to this species of correspondence, and to show your disapprobation of the same.

Will you please return me the article inclosed—it is not mine.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER.

Acting Rear Admiral, Commanding Miss, Squadron.

From this letter it is evident that Admiral Porter did not really believe in his heart that General Ellet was in any way responsible for these anonymous communications, nevertheless, as showing that they had left a sting which rankled in his mind, we quote from a letter, written in the October following, by the Admiral, to General Sherman, in which he indulges in wholesale charges, with no other foundation than this correspondence of some over-zealous soldier of the command. It does the writer little credit, but is a part of the history of the period. Happily, with the lapse of time, and a better understanding of the high-souled officer he thus criticized, this feeling was allayed and all trace of it disappears in Porter's history of these times. Of date, October 29, he wrote to Sherman: “Moreover the Ellets have been guilty of some very dirty, underhand work toward myself, in publishing contemptible articles in the papers, which I never noticed,

beyond exposing the parties to General Hurlbut, and having the progress of the editors suddenly arrested. In these transactions, the Ellets were guilty of gross falsehoods, in making malicious statements, and lied deliberately in afterward denying them. I made

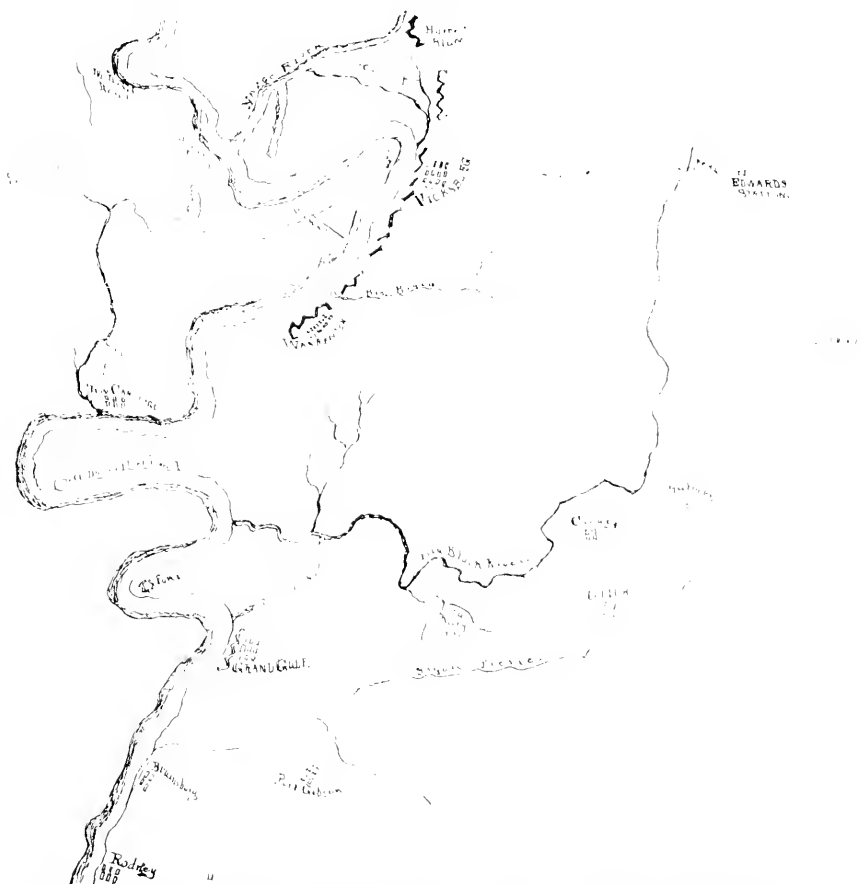


Diagram Showing Vicksburg's River Defenses, and Position of Marine Masked Battery in Levee Opposite City. The Country Shown was the Scene of Many Scouts and Encounters by the Marine Brigade.

"the editor show them up as they deserved to be. Still, I never took any notice of the matter."

Immediately upon the return of the Brigade from its Richmond expedition, further, independent operations on the point opposite

Vicksburg were begun. Lieut. Col. Geo. E. Currie, commanding the infantry conceived the idea of putting in a battery down there, and the General approved the plan. Accordingly soon after dark, on the 16th, with a detail of men and some deck-hands, he moved a Parrott gun down across the point, and in behind the levee, opposite the city. The work of building a sort of fort for this gun could be done only in the darkness of night, and with the utmost silence. At the point where it was decided to place the gun the embankment of the Shreveport and Vicksburg railroad coming in from the west, terminated near the river. An opening for the gun was first cut through this levee; then a casemate was constructed behind the levee, out of ties and other timbers, taken from the track; and finally all was covered over with iron rails, compactly laid, two side by side and a third inverted, and the rounding part of the rail shoved in between the others, thus locking all together and making a smooth, strong, resisting surface. In the morning, and at intervals during the day, the gun thus planted and protected, opened fire, always calling forth in reply, the fiercest response from the batteries of Vicksburg. Subsequently other guns were similarly placed, under the direction of Capt. T. C. Groshon of Co. F, Inf., an experienced artillist, and Lieut. E. H. Nichols, of Walling's battery. These guns proved a serious annoyance to the city, and greatly harrassed the enemy, who spared no amount of ammunition, in the attempt to destroy or dislodge them. Indeed a few days before the surrender of the city, they did finally, with a huge shell and a plunging shot, crush in the iron roof of one of these casemates, and silence the gun beneath. But the other guns remained where they were placed, and did more or less execution up to the surrender. Among other things accomplished by these guns was the stopping of the Vicksburg foundry. The Confederates had a foundry near the river, in which they were melting up the unexploded thirteen inch shells dropped by our mortars within their lines, and moulding them into cannon balls and shells, which they fired back at our men. A shell from one of the Marine guns on the point, fired by Captain Groshon, went through the boiler of this foundry, and the work of moulding Confederate cannon balls out of Union shells was thereafter discontinued. The Court House and other buildings, were often hit, a magazine was exploded, and one man, on his way to

church, Sunday morning, had his arm shot off. Almon J. Pierce of Co. G Inf., says in his diary that after the surrender, he saw and talked with this man. But the Marine guns were of too small caliber to contend with the heavy pieces in the water batteries. Had they been of heavier metal they would have done much more execution.

Some exciting, and some amusing incidents connected with the planting and use of these guns, are on record. Amos W. Bellows of Co. F, Inf., wrote in his diary: "Along in the night [while the casemate was in course of construction] the negroes dropped an iron rail. I know I never heard as loud a noise, before nor since, as that iron seemed to make." "There were some willows growing near the river, which interfered with the sighting of one of the guns"—says Mark Root in his diary of the day, "and Captain Groshon sent Eli Morse and myself to cut them down. Putting on an overcoat, I carried a lantern under it, and threw the light on the trees to be felled, while Captain Groshon stood within the casemate and gave directions through the open port hole. One of the trees was down, and we had commenced on another, when—zip! came a shell, burying itself in the ground about ten steps from us. The Captain shouted to us to put out our light. Just then came another shell, a little closer than the other. Now I could manipulate that lantern all right when on the boat, but somehow I could not now get at the burner. I finally chucked the lantern under my overcoat, and we started to run for the 'hole in the ground,' as the boys called the casemate. But we ran into the tree Morse had cut down, and getting tangled up in the brush, both fell down, and in doing so exposed the light again. Of course that drew the fire of the enemy on us. By this time, three guns upon the hillside across the river had range on us. Captain Groshon and Orderly Sergt. Vaughan, not knowing our predicament, got out of patience with us, since we neither chopped trees nor returned to the casemate, and used language at least not appropriate for Sunday school occasions. But we finally got out of the brush, and made our way back to the casemate, carrying our lantern, still burning, which had helped the Confederate gunners in their fusilade upon us. It was two o'clock in the morning before the Johnnies let up, and later before we were able to get to the DIAXA, and into our berths tired and sleepy." The next day Cap-

tain Groshon shot the willows away, and so cleared the way for an accurate fire on the city.

Capt. W. D. Crandall, writing under date of June 22d, said: "Yesterday, as some of our men were sitting a little way from their gun, eating their dinner, a shell exploded near, wounding one poor fellow in the arm quite severely. 'Good luck for him!'—his comrades exclaimed—'he'll get a furlough.'" Whether he got the furlough is doubtful, as the General's report of this affair, a few days later, declared that there was not the slightest injury to any one engaged.

On the 25th the Confederates, thinking to play a sharp trick on the Marines, sent a yawl over toward where the guns were, with a flag of truce flying, and bringing with them eight of our wounded Union soldiers, who had been prisoners several months. Evidently their real object was, to discover what the Marines were doing on the point, and more accurately locate their guns. But they were met at the water's edge by a Lieutenant and a squad. After receiving their prisoners, they were sent back, no wiser respecting the guns than when they came.

In compliance with General Ellet's request, Captain Groshon soon after made a written report of this gun service, which was forwarded by General Ellet to Admiral Porter, and was sent by him to the Secretary of the Navy. We give below the report and the correspondence relating to it, which supplies further information as to the enterprise, and who were engaged in it:

"Fort Adams," July 5, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, Commanding Marine Brigade:—

Sir: In compliance with your request, I submit the following report: Your order to Lieut. Col. George E. Currie to plant the 20-pound Parrott gun (belonging to the Adams) on the point, opposite the foundry in Vicksburg, to destroy said foundry, was commenced on the night of the 19th of June. As soon as it was sufficiently dark, Lieutenant Colonel Currie, in company with Capt. O. F. Brown, of the 1st Batt. Cav., Captain Hughes, Co. C. Inf., Captain Fisher, Co. E. Inf., with Companies F and K Inf., repaired to the place selected by him to plant the guns. After four days and nights of hard work, with the assistance of Masters Hendricks and Malbon of the *Autoerat* and *Adams*, we succeeded in building a casemented fort within a mile of the City of Vicksburg on the opposite side of the river, covering it with one thickness of railroad iron, deeming that sufficient protection for both the men and the

gun. On the morning of the 23rd of June, at 9 o'clock, I opened fire on the city, firing five rounds. The enemy responded promptly, firing seventy-seven rounds from five different guns, thirty-two, sixty-four, and one hundred and twenty-eight pounders. Although there was no damage done to the fort, it was thought best to strengthen the work, by adding one more thickness of railroad iron, which made it sufficiently strong to withstand the heaviest imaginable fire. On the 24th I fired seven rounds, and the enemy returned seventy-eight rounds. The fort was struck once, but the majority of the shots were too high. These shots came principally from the 128-pounders, yet no damage was done. I fired twenty rounds on the 25th, all of which were directed at the foundry and machine shop, and which accomplished the desired result. The enemy returned but six rounds, doing no damage whatever.

On the 26th I fired eight rounds, at different buildings in the city: the enemy returned thirteen rounds, without damage.

On the 27th I fired twenty-eight rounds. This day I suppose the shots had but little or no effect, or else the enemy thought it impossible to silence the gun, as they did not return the fire at all. On the 28th I fired seven rounds, the enemy returning sixty-four rounds. They had by this time got perfect range of the fort, and struck it three times during the day's firing. The damage done us was but slight, and easily repaired. I fired but two rounds on the 29th, the enemy returning fifteen rounds. They still kept the range, and seemed to strike the fort at their pleasure. Four shots struck the fort doing no damage to it, but the shots cut in pieces railroad iron and ties that were lying loose, in front and on top of the fort; also tearing up the ground in every direction, rendering it unsafe for the men to venture outside the fort, as it appeared that the enemy could see all our movements, and would fire the moment a man exposed himself outside. No material damage was sustained. I did no firing on the 30th, or on the 1st of July, as the fleet moved up the river to Goodrich's Landing, and took part in an engagement near that place. On the 2nd of July, I fired seven rounds, the enemy making no reply. The 3rd (the last day) I fired fourteen rounds, six of which I directed at "Sky Parlor" (used by the enemy for a lookout). They did not seem to like it, and tried their best to silence the gun, by firing ninety shots at the fort, six of which struck it, knocking off railroad ties, and tearing up the ground on top of, and around the fort, but no damage done to the fort whatever. At 6 o'clock p. m., orders came to cease firing, as the city was about to be surrendered.

Before concluding this report, I would say great credit is due both officers and men of the companies herein mentioned, for the work done, and the spirit manifested, in building the fort. Since the surrender of the city, I have learned from the foreman of the foundry that fourteen shots struck the foundry and machine shop, two of which penetrated the boilers, rendering

them useless for further operations. The machine shop was also badly damaged by the shots. The six shots thrown at the "Sky Parlor" had good effect killing two men, and doing considerable damage otherwise.

I am sir, very respectfully your obedient servant.

THOS. C. GROSHON,

Capt. Co. F Inft., M. M. B., Com'dg "Fort Adams."

Headquarters Miss. Marine Brigade,

Flag Ship Autocrat, Young's Point, July 9, 1863.

David D. Porter, Com'dy Miss. Squadron:

Admiral: I have the honor to inclose a report from Capt. Groshon respecting the operations of the 20-pounder Parrott, placed on the point opposite Vicksburg by my order, and worked by himself, for the purpose of destroying the steam foundry, operating in that city. I am glad to be able to inform you that the gun accomplished all for which it was intended. The work at the foundry was stopped, the boiler having been exploded by a shot, and considerable damage was done to that and other buildings. I can not refrain in this connection from calling your attention to the merit of this undertaking. To erect a battery in the face of such frowning forts as protected the river front of Vicksburg, to fire it constantly for the space of ten days, in open view, in defiance of the concentrated discharge of all the enemy's guns; and this without the slightest injury to a single person engaged, and with the most complete results as to the object for which it was intended, renders those worthy of special mention who so faithfully discharged that duty. The fort was erected and the gun put in position by Lieut. Col. Geo. E. Currie, aided by First Master Samuel Hendricks, with the soldiers from the Adams, of this command. The gun was commanded and sighted by Captain Groshon in person.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED W. ELLET,

Brigadier General,

U. S. Miss. Squadron, Flag Ship Black Hawk.

Off Vicksburg, July 20, 1863.

Hon. Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy:

Sir: I forwarded by last mail, which should have been accompanied by this letter, a report of General Ellet, in relation to a battery of small guns placed opposite Vicksburg, which is said to have annoyed the enemy very much.

I think I can approve of all that General Ellet has said in relation to the officer in charge of it. It certainly stopped the work in the foundry, and prevented the rebels from casting cannon balls, at which they were busily engaged.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

Acting Rear Admiral Com'dg.

Although the report of Captain Groshon omits mention of them, there is indubitable evidence that there were other officers and men who participated in the gun planting. Some were doubtless volunteers, and their presence not specially noticed, as several different reliefs, took part during the work of construction. Here are such additional names as our Historians find in that connection, and it is by no means certain that this is all who really took part: Lieut. A. C. Hawley, Co. I. Inf.—Lieut. E. H. Nichols, Light Art.—Sergt. W. A. Lyster, S. D. Lasier, T. H. Hambaugh, William Smith, Robert Forrest, Mike Russell, and William Miller, all of Co. I. Inf., Henry G. Smith, Light Art.; also the names of David Weaver, Robert F. Andrews, John Higgleston, Moses Simmonds, Ferdinand Snyder, and Mike Enrite, whose company designations not being given. They may have belonged in some of the companies mentioned by Captain Groshon.

Guerrillas were again active in their operations along the river above, and between the 17th and the 26th scouting parties were sent out in every direction. On the night of the 26th information was received that the enemy premeditated an attack upon Milliken's Bend. This information being communicated to Admiral Porter, he ordered the fleet to at once start up the river, and the run was made that night. The threatened point was reached about sunrise. No attack had yet been made. The cavalry was at once landed and sent out. They found an enemy in full retreat, having probably heard of the coming of the Brigade, and not caring for an encounter with it. On the 27th the command returned to Young's Point. On the 29th information was obtained of an intended attack upon Goodrich's Landing, and orders were received from Admiral Porter for the Brigade to proceed thither without delay. The garrison at this point consisted of two negro regiments, who had a very good little fort, into which they might retire in time of danger. The fleet at once got under way, and the point of destination was reached at half past two, on the morning of the following day. Upon arrival it was learned that, during the forenoon of the previous day, two negro companies, though sheltered in a little fort, situated upon the top of a natural mound, about one hundred feet high, had been taken prisoners. But while the enemy had hovered around all day, making no assault upon the larger fort,

near the river, they had spent the time in burning cotton-gins, plantation mansions, negro quarters, etc., up and down, and back, many miles from the river. Lake Providence was also threatened, and the attacking force had pushed their depredations well up toward that place. The commander of the garrison reported the enemy some three or four miles distant, and it was arranged for the Brigade, accompanied by the negro regiments, to go out at day break next morning and give battle. Eager for the fray, and fearing that, as in the former instance, the enemy might slip away before he could get at them, General Ellet started in the early morning, without waiting for himself or his men to breakfast, or even to fill their haversacks. It was expected to come upon the enemy a short distance out, and to make a "before-breakfast" job of it. All along the line of march cotton-gins, houses and negro quarters were still burning. About five miles back from the river, it was discovered that the wrong road had been taken, and the command was countermarched to a place in the rear, where another road led in the direction of Bayou Tensas. Here arms were stacked, and while the infantry were resting, the cavalry went forward on the bayou road to reconnoitre.

At this point, very fortunately, a large blackberry patch was found. The hungry, breakfastless men soon scattered through it, and when they were again called into line it was perceptible that the entire force were "colored" troops. About noon word came that the advance had found, and was holding in check, the Confederate force, consisting of a strong body of cavalry, with several pieces of artillery. The infantry were summoned from their feasting, and at once hurried forward. Coming up with the advance, the enemy was found drawn up in line, on the opposite side of the bayou, and saluted the Union troops with a vigorous fire. In anticipation of the Brigade's coming, the enemy had gone across the bayou and burned the bridge behind them, so that it was impossible to get fairly at them. However, under the accurate fire of the infantry, seconded by the splendid service of the artillery, they were soon dislodged, and sullenly retired. As they could not be pursued, the Marine force, together with the garrison troops returned to the river, the Marines having eaten nothing but berries for twenty-four hours.

In this fight the Brigade sustained a serious loss in the mortal

wounding of Capt. W. H. Wright of Co. D, Cavalry. He was shot through the body, by a hidden foe on the other side of the Bayou, and died the same night, and was buried with the honors of war at Porter's Point, July 1st. Captain Wright, who left a young wife in St. Louis, was a natural soldier, and an efficient officer, greatly beloved by his men. Characterized by a reckless type of bravery, he was probably the victim of needless personal exposure. In closing his account of this fight, Porter, in his *Naval History*, says: "General Ellet gave the party at Goodrich's Landing a lesson which they did not soon forget, and having completely routed the enemy, returned to the mouth of the Yazoo."

Before leaving the subject of this rebel raid upon the plantations at Goodrich's, mention must be made of a public charge of barbarism, in the treatment of officers and men of the negro garrison, captured by the rebels. Officers and men of the Marine Brigade noted evidences, on their march that day, that human bodies had been burned in several of the cabins, destroyed by fire, but whether killed and burned, or burned alive, or simply the charred corpses, of the unburied, could not be told. Captain Crandall, Assistant Adjutant General wrote of seeing the remains of five persons, in the ruins of three plantations, passed by the command. A somewhat sensational letter from Lieut. S. F. Cole of the M. M. B., soon after found its way into print, in the *St. Louis (Mo.) Democrat*, alleging that numerous charred skeletons of the white officers of negro troops were found, in some cases nailed to trees and slabs, and evidently burned alive. General Halleck, Commander-in-Chief, in a communication dated August 12, brought this article to the attention of General Grant, for an inquiry into the facts. But, though Grant had previously demanded of General Taylor, full recognition and proper treatment of white officers of negro troops, no further light is thrown upon the alleged barbarities above referred to.

The fleet remained at Young's Point until the evening of the 3d, and then dropped down into the bend above Vicksburg. In the afternoon of this day, there was a general cessation of hostilities, in view of pending negotiations for the surrender of the city and its defending forces. On the morning of the 4th the commanders of the different boats received orders from General Ellet to hold their vessels in

readiness to drop down to the city, and at eleven o'clock the Marine fleet, closely following in the wake of Admiral Porter's flagship, moved down stream. Ellet's flagship, the *Atrockay*, was the second boat to touch the city wharf, after the surrender. The men of the Command, as soon as the boats landed, were permitted to go ashore, and were soon to be seen gathered in groups, and engaged in animated but friendly converse with the men who had just surrendered and stacked their arms. One topic discussed with special interest, in all these mingled groups of Confederates and Marines, was the battery, planted by the Brigade, on the Point opposite the city. The captain of one of the water batteries expressed a great desire to go across and see how the guns were put in, declaring that he could not understand how they were able to withstand the heavy bombardment from their huge pieces. All agreed that the Marine guns had given them great annoyance, and had done them no small amount of damage.

In his report of the surrender, Admiral Porter pays this just tribute to the part taken in great Vicksburg campaign by the Marine Brigade. "While the Army have had a troublesome enemy in front and behind them, the gunboats, Marine Brigade under General Ellet, and a small force under Generals Dennis and Mower, have kept at bay a large force of rebels, over twelve thousand strong, accompanied by a large quantity of artillery."

July 4, 1863, will never be forgotten by the men on either side of the conflict, that day terminated. It was a Glorious Fourth to the Union Army and Navy, while of course a bitter experience to the Confederates. But as later events showed, to many of the hungry garrison it was a fortunate ending of a hapless campaign, and opened the way for not a few to abandon the hopeless struggle.




CHAPTER IV



July-November, 1863

A False Alarm. Drummed Out. Sickness in the Fleet. Plans That Didn't Work. Transporting Troops to Helena. Resignations. A Detail to the V. D. Cavalry at Natchez.—Transporting Troops to Port Hudson and New Orleans.—Storm on the River. Affair at Bayou Sara. Brigade Under Grant's Orders. Off for Repairs and Recruits. Patrolling the River. Scouting and Important Captures by Currie and His Men. Ashore at Vicksburg.—Supporting the Goodrich Garrison.—Currie's Deer Creek Raid.—Burns the Montgomery Mansion. Death of Col. Charles R. Ellet. Narrow Escape of the Ruine. Boats Repaired.—Soldier Killed in Cairo Saloon.—Scouting From Goodrich's. The Brigade Bear.

The long strain of the siege of Vicksburg was over, but the Marines were not to enjoy much of a respite. On the evening of July 5, the Command was again ordered up to Lake Providence, which was reported to be threatened with attack. Upon reaching Young's Point, however, it was learned through General Dennis that no attack was probable. A tug was accordingly sent to Admiral Porter with General Dennis' statement of the situation, and orders came back from the Admiral for the fleet to remain where it then was, until further order.

On dress parade the evening of the 6th, a private of Co. F, Inf. was drummed out of the service. It is doubtful whether the infliction of any other discipline, even death by shooting for some grave offense, makes greater impression upon enlisted men, than does "drumming out of service." It was the only instance of this kind occurring in the history of the Brigade. Evidently the discipline was not without some good effect upon the man himself, as well as upon his com-

rades, for he was afterward seen in Vicksburg, having obtained employment as a teamster, and conducting himself in a creditable manner.

During this mid-summer there was much sickness among the men on the boats, and it was quite fatal. During the week ending on the 18th, eleven soldiers and two deck-hands died. In the log-book of the *AUROCRAT* it is noted: "The morality on the hospital boat for the last three days is very great."

About this time the ram *MONARCH*, being on her way to Cairo, was enabled, by her timely arrival at Columbus, Ky., to render an important and efficient service, as is shown by the following:

Headquarters 6th Div, 16th Army Corps, Columbus, Ky., July 7, 1863.

Fleet Capt. A. M. Pennock, Com'dy Naval Station, Cairo, Ill.:—

Sir:—The ram *Monarch* arrived this morning from Hickman, and is now leaving for Cairo. Capt. Asgill Conner (18th Ill. Inf., commanding) had already occupied Hickman when my cavalry rode in, and acted efficiently and promptly.

Please thank the captain for me, and accept my acknowledgements for the assistance rendered by the *Monarch*.

It would be to the best interests of the service to place the ram *Monarch* between Island No. 10 and Columbus, where she could operate with my land forces, appearing promptly at any point threatened or attacked on this part of the river—so much exposed to rebel raids. Without the co-operation of a ram or gunboat, it will be difficult for my very limited force to act with efficiency, and the desired degree of success, against the robbers, infesting the Ohio Bottoms.

ASHBOTH,

Brigadier General.

On the 9th the fleet was ordered to the mouth of White river, where it arrived about 9 o'clock a. m. of the 12th. Nothing of special interest transpired on the way up, and after lying here until noon next day, and finding no demand for its services, the Brigade started back. While at the mouth of White river, news was received of the capture of Port Hudson, and also of the Morgan raid into Indiana.

On the downward trip, a stop was made at Goodrich's Landing, in the afternoon of the 10th, and the cavalry was put ashore and sent out to Bayou Tensas, but found no indication of the enemy's presence. While here a soldier was buried from off the *DIANA*. On the 17th the

Paymaster, always a welcome visitor among the men, arrived and remained until the 20th. About this time numerous leaves of absence, among both officers and men, were granted.

Starting at two o'clock a. m. on the 21st, the fleet ran down to Ashwood Landing, near the mouth of Black river, and landing on the Louisiana side, some two hours later sent out a detachment of cavalry. This scout resulted in the capture of one Lieutenant [Andrew S. Routh] and two enlisted men, and the arrest of several disloyal citizens, and the confiscation of a quantity of provisions. There was, however, no considerable body of Confederate troops found in the vicinity, as had been reported.

This raid to the plantation of John Routh, was later made the subject of a lengthy communication, from one A. T. Bowie, a rebel citizen, on behalf of Routh, to General Ransom at Natchez, and by him forwarded to Grant. In the complaint it was alleged that the squad of cavalry declared themselves freebooters, independent of the United States, with booty for their only pay, etc.—and that they thereupon robbed him of \$15,000 worth of silverware, and \$10,000 worth of table and house linen; also took his nephew prisoner—though the latter had not been in the rebel army for three months (having sent a substitute in his place). This complaint was (without any investigation or inquiry, so far as appears) transmitted by Grant to Brig. Gen. L. Thomas, the Adjutant General of the Army (then at Vicksburg). In his letter inclosing it (Aug. 14) Grant states that it is but one of many such complaints, and that while it is highly probable that these charges are exaggerated, yet on account of the great cost of maintaining the Brigade, and the slight service it renders, and the excellent use its boats could be put to, he strongly recommends—if there be nothing in the terms of enlistment of the Brigade to prevent—that the command be transferred to land service, and the boats turned over to the quartermaster's department. General Thomas seems to have at once conferred with Admiral Porter about this recommendation, as his letter to the Secretary of War on the subject bears the same date. It reads as follows:

Vicksburg, Miss., August 14, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

Sir: Major General Grant is very desirous of having transferred to him

Brigadier General Ellet's command, which is in accordance with the wishes of Admiral Porter. General Ellet has seven of the largest and finest boats on the western waters for a command not exceeding 800 effective men. General Grant constantly requires transports for troops, and if this transfer is made he will land General Ellet's command, and thus be enabled to avail himself of the transports; besides, he can give General Ellet, when on shore, a command more suitable to his rank.

L. THOMAS,
Adjutant General.

It will be noticed that this letter of General Thomas presents the matter of disposing of the Brigade in an entirely different way, for it sets out with the assertion that General Grant wants it transferred to him, and that such change is also desired by the Admiral. Then he argues Grant's need of the "seven large, fine vessels"—incorrectly stating that the whole force does not exceed 800—and lastly says that "when on shore, a command, more suitable to his rank, can be given General Ellet." No allusion is made to the complaints—the ostensible ground of action in the matter—but the purpose is evident, to get the Brigade ashore, dispossessed of its boats. And it is likewise apparent that both Porter and Grant at that time desired this result—each from motives of his own—doubtless believed by each to be for the best interests of the service. The General under the present plan could only obtain the services of the Brigade, or the use of its boats, by requesting same of the Admiral, and the latter found a decided disposition to independent action on the part of the Brigade, and little affiliation with his own command, due in part to the fact that it was purely an army organization. So, it would appear that General Thomas lent his good offices to please, and accommodate both, utterly ignoring the rights and the feelings of both General Ellet and his men. But we shall soon see it illustrated that "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-glee." Here are two dispatches, responding to above recommendations, in no uncertain terms:

Washington, August 24, 1863.

Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, Vicksburg:

General: Adjutant General Thomas has telegraphed to the War Department asking that Brigadier General Ellet's Marine Brigade be placed on shore duty, and his ram-boats be turned over to you as transports.

The secretary of war does not approve the conversion of this marine or river brigade into a land brigade, but authorizes you to use any of General

Ellet's brigade for temporary shore duty, and any of his boats for temporary transports whenever the exigencies of the service require their use.

The brigade was organized and the men enlisted especially for service as river-men, in conjunction with either the military or naval forces as circumstances might require. They have already proved themselves valuable auxiliaries, and can probably be used to great advantage against guerrilla parties on the Mississippi, and with expeditions up the Arkansas and Red Rivers. Moreover as the men have been enlisted for a special service, if that service were entirely changed it might be claimed that they were released from their contract. Alternate employment on land and water, as circumstances may require, is deemed within the object of the organization. You are therefore authorized to so employ the boats and the men as you may require their services. It is said by Adjutant General Thomas that Admiral Porter wishes you to take charge of these boats and the brigade.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK,
General-in-Chief.

Washington, D. C., August 27, 1863.

Major-General Grant, Vicksburg, Miss.:

General: Your dispatch of the 14th, in regard to Ellet's brigade, has been received and showed to the Secretary of War. He directs that you assume command of this brigade, and take proper measures to reduce it to discipline, trying and punishing the guilty parties. For reasons given in my letter of the 24th instant, it is not deemed advisable at present to break up this brigade, but you can detach and place on shore such portions of it as you may deem necessary for the good of the service.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK,
General-in-Chief.

This decisive reply postponed for one whole year the action, which unfriendly and critical commanders at length accomplished. In the meantime Grant's transfer to other scenes, and local changes in Army commanders, as well as the almost daily demonstration of the usefulness of the Brigade as guerrilla fighters, prevented agitation of that subject. But, as will be noticed, authority was given for any needed temporary use of the boats as transports for troops, and the change of control from Porter to Grant was followed by the frequent use of the boats, in moving large bodies of troops from Vicksburg, to points above and below.

Before leaving the subject, these charges of marauding and robbery, whenever brought to Ellet's attention, were always promptly

and vigorously handled, for he was intolerant of any sort of lawlessness. Generally they were found baseless, but a few instances of guilt and severe punishment will be found alluded to in their place. So active, and constant, and widely extended were the operations of the Brigade, that it is no wonder the mailed hand of Ellet's men was felt throughout all rebeldom, along the Mississippi. Porter in his history bears frequent testimony to the effectiveness of their service.

Returning to our narrative of events, in the order of their occurrence, the fleet, on July 23rd, under orders for that duty, had repaired to Haines' Bluff, for the embarkation of troops destined for Helena. On the way up to this latter place, the ADAMS was crippled through the breaking of one of her wheels, and had to be taken in tow by the RAINE. On the return trip the Ram MOXARCH fell behind the rest of the fleet, with orders to cruise awhile in the vicinity of Greenville.

On the 28th, the resignations of Captain Calvin Reed of Co. D, Inf., and Lieutenant Horatio N. Rowe of Co. G, Inf., were tendered, favorably endorsed, and forwarded to Washington. Returning, with the ADAMS still in tow, the fleet reached Vicksburg at 4 o'clock a. m. of the 31st. While the fleet lay opposite the city the MOXARCH came down, having captured six wagons, with their mule teams, and several prisoners, and bringing away about one hundred negroes. Reporting to General Grant, upon his arrival, General Ellet was instructed to put his boats in readiness to transport other troops, and repairs on the ADAMS were accordingly hurried to completion.

August 1th, Lieut. S. R. Holmes, of the Light Battery, tendered his resignation. Later, as the records show, serious charges were preferred against him, and on September 3, it was noted that he had deserted, and nothing appears to have been subsequently heard of him.

On the 7th of August Lieut. A. G. Curtis, Adjutant of the infantry, tendered his resignation, which was accepted. August 8th, William H. Sloan, Second Lieutenant of Co. H, Inf., on account of serious and increasing trouble with his eyes, tendered his resignation, and notice of its final acceptance at Washington reached Brigade Headquarters on the 30th.

August 14th, Colonel Charles R. Ellet's resignation was tendered, and was forwarded approved by the General, and leave of absence granted, pending its acceptance.

The enlistment of negro troops was now engaging the attention of the authorities at Washington, and somewhere about this time came the following orders, of particular interest to some of the Brigade:

Washington, D. C., August 1, 1863.

Special Orders No. 10.

The following officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates [all of Company B Cav., Miss. Marine Brigade] are announced as the officers of the Fourth Regiment Arkansas Volunteers of African Descent. They will be detailed from their respective regiments to raise the troops, and as companies, battalions, and regiments are organized, they will be mustered out of service, and discharged and mustered into the new regiments.

* * * * *	* * * * *
Capt. Jay M. Brown,	3rd Sergt. S. C. Nicholson,
Private Geo. W. Fulsom,	Private Edwin R. Riekey,
Corpl. George Miller,	8th Sergt. Wm. H. Rodecker,
1st Sergt. Charles Norton,	7th Sergt. Benj. F. Frazer,
Private Peter H. Yost,	Corpl. Jno. N. Buchman,
1st Sergt. John McClintock,	Private Wm. C. Felton,
Q. M. Sergt. Geo. Downs,	Private Jno. B. McKenzie,
Corpl. Alonzo M. Church,	Bugler Geo. Lum,
Blacksmith Frank Lloyd,	Private Chas. A. Turner,
Blacksmith Berg. Knudson,	6th Sergt. Jacob Cribbs,
* * * * *	* * * * *

By order of the Secretary of War.

L. THOMAS,
Adjutant General.

During the time of the Marine boats being engaged in this transfer service—August 2d to 20th—three companies of the Marine cavalry were, at the request of General Gresham, put ashore, and encamped at Natchez, making almost daily expeditions into the surrounding country and guarding wagon trains of cotton, much of which was found and brought in. The men were put ashore with but few cooking utensils, or much camp equipage, but judging from an entry or two in Captain De Coster's diary, these amphibious Marines didn't mind the deprivation.

Under date of the 12th his diary says: "The boats have gone to Port Hudson. Well, I don't care! I have a clean shirt, and late papers." Again on the 16th, "Plenty of honey, sweet milk, corn-bread, butter, melons, chickens, etc."—quite enough, it would seem to insure peace and contentment in any camp.

Four trips to and fro were made by the Marine boats in this service of transportation. Two of them were to Natchez, upon the first of which Slack's Brigade, and on the second Lee's Command was carried; one trip to Port Hudson; and one to New Orleans.

Great difficulty was encountered in securing sufficient coal for the fleet while thus engaged. On the return trip from New Orleans, fence rails, secured from plantations along the river, were burned, and the fleet reached Vicksburg with but little even of this kind of fuel. On the 14th, while making the trip to New Orleans, a gale came up, which swept the river with great fury, disputing even the flow of its strong, swift current, and rolling up huge waves which broke over the bows, and flooded the lower decks of the vessels. Captain Newell, well remembers, after the lapse of more than forty years, his standing in the pilot house of the Flagship *ATROCITY* while she, unable to make a foot of progress, was trembling and creaking under the strain, and speculating in his mind as to how long she could weather the blast. In the midst of it all Mr. Underwood, the pilot, stood calm and undisturbed at the wheel, and by skilled handling of the bells, manipulated the engines, while holding the boat's bow in the teeth of the wind. During this storm the *BALTIMORE* lost a barge loaded with the camp equipment, transportation, etc., belonging to one of the regiments being transferred on her. But under the skillful supervision of sailing master Meekin, and his force, in an all night's work, most of the barge's contents were recovered. On this day a prisoner fell overboard from one of the boats and was drowned.

On the 18th, while returning from New Orleans, a small squad of Confederates who had come in from the country, and had "tanked up" at the saloon in the town of Bayou Sara, opened a musketry fire on the fleet. A landing was promptly effected, the town and its suburbs were thoroughly searched for the offenders. All the male citizens were rounded up for an explanation. They all disavowed any responsibility whatever for the attack. Their disavowal seemed sincere, and after solemn warning that serious consequences would attend any repetition of the offense, the saloon was burned and the Brigade passed on.

Soon after reaching Vicksburg from this New Orleans trip, the last in the series for the transfer of troops, owing to the arrival of

regular transports, the Marine fleet was temporarily relieved from further service in this line.

The Commander of the Brigade now found himself confronted with difficulties which seriously interfered with the efficiency and success of his command. First of all, it was now, and for some time had been, almost impossible to secure and have transported down the river, a supply of coal, at all adequate to the needs of his large fleet. Secondly, through sickness and the casualties of war, the command had been considerably reduced in numbers. Because the Marine Brigade was a national organization, men recruited into it could not be credited to the states within which they lived. The different states, therefore, refused to permit within their limits the enrollment of men for the Brigade, unless general orders were issued from Washington authorizing such enlistment, so that the proper credit would be given to the respective states, for the men obtained. And lastly, several of the boats were greatly in need of such repairs as they could receive only in the dockyards. The General had made these conditions known to the Department, and the following response had been received, and under its sanction, it was now arranged that a portion of the command should proceed to Cairo, for the purposes indicated:

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, August 29, 1863.

Brig. Gen. Alfred W. Ellet:

Your command has been placed under charge of Major General Grant. All applications for authority to recruit or for other purposes must be made to him.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

General Ellet accordingly started, with the Flagship *ARISTOCRAT*, from Vicksburg, August 21st, at half past nine p. m. The hospital boat *Woodford* followed, September 9th, the *RAIXE* September 19th.

The command of the fleet left below, devolved upon Major Hubbard, in the absence of the Colonel, and of Lieut. Col. Geo. E. Currie, then also away on leave; but on the 27th of August Colonel Currie returned to the fleet, took command, and at once resumed operations, from White river to Vicksburg, and below. On the 31st, at Griffith's Landing, on the Louisiana side, the cavalry was sent out, and got track of some Confederates, pursued them, and captured seven of their number.

and at 9 p. m. returned to the fleet, having scoured the country for twelve miles around. September 3d the whole command was disembarked at Griffith's Landing on the Mississippi side, and marched to Greenville, arriving there at 1 o'clock p. m. Reports were received that Confederates were seen, deployed in a field near by. Investigation proved this report false, since no such body of the enemy could be found, and so the troops returned to the fleet at Griffith's Landing.

On the 8th Colonel Currie's vessels were at the mouth of White river, and on the 9th, opposite Napoleon, three companies of cavalry were sent out, back from the river fifteen or twenty miles, into Mississippi. On this scout a Confederate Paymaster, Lieutenant Clemenson, was captured, together with one million two hundred thousand dollars in Confederate money, and a draft payable at Alexandria, La., for one million more, all contained in sealed packages and carried in a hand valise. The Paymaster and his clerk, when captured, were riding in an old U. S. stage coach, drawn by two mules, and guarded by an escort of three officers and fifteen men, all heavily armed. The coach and its escort were come upon too suddenly for the party to make any resistance, and they were very quietly taken in. At the time of their capture this party was on its way to Bolivar Landing, on the Mississippi river, where arrangements had been made for crossing them over into Arkansas in small boats, during the night. The money was en route to Little Rock, for the use of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederate Army. With the money were also found the following Confederate orders:

DISBURSING OFFICE, U. S. A., WAR DEPARTMENT,
NITRE AND MIXING BUREAU.

Richmond, Va., August 30, 1863.

Lieut. J. C. Clemenson:

Sir: Two Hundred Thousand Dollars has been issued to you, for which you will be accountable under the appropriations, viz:

Purchase of land, copper and other minerals.....	\$ 25,000.00
Purchase of manufactories of nitre, etc.....	50,000.00
Purchase of pig iron and rolled iron.....	125,000.00

You will please acknowledge receipt through this office.

Very respectfully your obedient servant.

H. T. PIERSON,

Lieut. and Disbursing Officer.

C. S. A. WAR DEPARTMENT,
SALT AND MINING BUREAU.

Richmond, Va., August 31, 1863.

Lieut. J. C. Clemenson:

Sir: You are directed to proceed, as soon as your necessary arrangements can be made, to the headquarters of Hon. T. G. Clemenson, in charge of the Iron service, in the Trans-Mississippi Department, and report to him for duty as Executive and Disbursing officer. You will meet his requisitions, and *his only*, for funds.

Very respectfully,

J. M. D. JONES,
Major and Superintendent.

This capture also included a large package of official dispatches, more valuable than the money, from the Confederate War Department, and directed to Lieut. Gen. Kirby E. Smith, Maj. Generals Walker, Hughes, and other officers in the Trans. Mississippi Department of the C. S. Army. A large private mail was captured at the same time.

According to previous agreement the cavalry rejoined the boats at Bolivar Landing, where Paymaster Clemenson expected to cross over, but where he spent the night comfortably quartered, but closely guarded by Federal soldiers.

On the 12th, this important capture, prisoners, money, and mail, went to Cairo on the RAINE. In the meantime General Ellet had been advised (at Philadelphia, where he was then on short leave of absence) of the big haul in money, mail, and men, and the following dispatches were exchanged:

Philadelphia, Pa., September 21, 1863.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

I have just received intelligence of the capture, by a detachment of my forces, under command of Lieut. Col. Geo. E. Currie, of three rebel officers and a number of privates, with Two Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars in Confederate funds, and very important dispatches, all of which are now at Cairo. I would, in the absence of Major General Grant, request instructions respecting the immediate disposition of the rebel dispatches, etc.

Very respectfully,

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., September 21, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet:

You will cause all the Confederate funds and dispatches, mentioned in your telegram of this date as being captured by your command, to be brought to the War Department, in Washington, and delivered to the Adjutant General.

EDWIN M. STANTON.

In compliance with the Secretary's order, the money and the mail went to Washington in charge of Lieut. E. C. Ellet, aid on the General's staff.

Between the 8th and the 24th, the time was occupied by the Brigade below, in almost daily scouts, from various points up and down the river, with varying success. Between these two dates another draft, signed by the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury, for one million dollars more and Confederate Money to the amount of fifty-two thousand three hundred and forty dollars, were also captured and sent to Cairo, making a grand total of three million two hundred and fifty-two thousand three hundred and forty dollars, captured by the Brigade within fifteen days. Within this same period twenty-five prisoners were also captured, among whom were Col. Trusten Polk, Paymaster Clemenson and clerk, and three other officers.

On the 17th the resignations of Capt. Calvin Reed of Co. D. Inf. and Lieut. S. F. Cole of Co. B. Cav., came back from Washington favorably endorsed.

On the 24th, in the obedience to orders received from General Hurlbut, for the Command "to proceed without delay to Vicksburg, and report to the commanding officer there," the fleet started down. Upon their arrival at Vicksburg, the Marines were temporarily set ashore, while their boats were used for the transportation of troops, equipment, and provisions, to various other points where they were needed. The new conditions, in which the men thus unexpectedly found themselves, were odd to most of them, and quickly to accommodate themselves to their environment, and knowing that a real emergency demanded of them self-sacrifice, they cheerfully went into camp. Lieut. Col. Currie, who was now in command, was a strict disciplinarian and a thorough tactician, whose camp delight was drill. He at

once issued orders providing for practice in the manual of arms, company evolutions, and dress parade, each day. Garrison duty in Vicksburg, at this time, was not light, and this in addition to what was required of the men in their own camp, gave them no time to become discontented. Besides, during the day, passes were easily procurable for those not on duty, and the Marines, who had had but little chance to see the city, to view the Confederate lines of intrenchments and various places of interest, made the most of their present opportunity in this direction. And so while the men missed the shelter of their decks, the comfort of their cabins, and the conveniences of their wash rooms and laundry appliances, their stay on shore was to them in a sense like a lull in a storm. It was, to say the least, a change, and change is rest.

On the 18th of October, in the afternoon, came the welcome order "Get ready to go back on board the boats." Along with this order, was circulated the report among the men that there was trouble up the river, which it was now the especial business of the Command to look after. It was a busy time; camp equipage, arms, artillery ammunition, provisions, headquarters fixtures, hospital stores, and personal belongings, all had to be repacked, and then carried on board. And though the men worked faithfully until midnight, and the matter of getting settled in quarters was postponed to a later time, it was not until 8 o'clock next morning, that the signal-whistle for starting was sounded. Colonel Hawkins, at Goodrich's Landing, had reported that the enemy, four thousand strong, had crossed Bayou Mason, and that he needed immediate reinforcements, and General McPherson's order directing the Marine Brigade to the scene, explained the present movement.

Goodrich's Landing was reached the same evening about 7 o'clock. Orders were issued for two days rations to be put into haversacks, and all needful preparations were made for a long, hard day's service on the morrow. The negro garrison was in a state of more or less excitement, and the wildest rumors were afloat. It was reported as coming from Colonel Hawkins, Post Commander, that a hostile force of four thousand was approaching with intent to reduce the place, and then clear out the plantations, from Lake Providence to Milliken's Bend. After reaching the place, Colonel Currie sent out a detachment, the same

evening, with one piece of artillery to feel for the enemy. This detachment not having returned, the rest of the cavalry battalion was sent out in the morning. Both parties remained out until three o'clock a. m. of the 21st. While out, Private James Drummond had his leg badly injured from his horse falling with him, while riding at high speed, in the night. Nothing, however, was found by either party to indicate the immediate presence of any force of the enemy.

General Ellet reached the command during the night of the 20th, from Cairo, coming down on the ram *FULTON*, and was warmly greeted by officers and men, next morning. He remained with the fleet until toward evening, and then went on down to Vicksburg. On the morning of the 22d, the cavalry was again sent out, with two days rations, and instructions to spare no pains to make sure respecting the reported presence of the enemy. During the night there was a false alarm, occasioned by firing on the picket line of the colored garrison. The Command was called out, and prepared for a fight. But after about half an hour's stretching and yawning (and doubtless some swearing) all returned to quarters and slept soundly until morning. The night was dark, rainy and cold, and the cavalry, still out, actually suffered from cold, even more than from weariness. General Ellet returned from Vicksburg during the night of the 22d, and left in the afternoon of the next day for Cairo. Just at dark on the 24th, the cavalry and their artillery came in, having travelled one hundred and fifty miles. They brought with them three prisoners with their arms. While out they pursued quite a party of Confederates, all of whom except the three already mentioned, escaped from them. With these three men, a couple of negroes were also captured, and supposing them to be "Union," they were left without guard. But in the night the sly coons "vamoosed the ranch," taking with them a couple of the best horses in the Command, and Major Tallerd's pistols.

On the 27th, it being evident that there was no probability of an attack on Goodrich's Landing, and securing the assent of Colonel Hawkins, Colonel Currie took his departure, heading his fleet up stream, and landing at Griffith's Landing in Washington County, Miss. On the 28th, one hundred cavalry under command of Captain O. F. Brown, of Co. C., was sent out to reconnoitre the Deer Creek country,

stretching about twenty-five miles east from Griffith's Landing. They left the boats at 6 o'clock in the morning, and returned at 10 o'clock p. m., having covered forty-five miles. While out, the detachment captured and brought in with them, Capt. G. C. Price, an agent of the Confederate Commissary Department, actively engaged in purchasing stock for the use of the southern army. Twelve thousand dollars in Confederate money was found in his possession, and taken charge of. With Captain Price were also captured a sergeant and six privates of the Sixth Texas Cavalry, who had been detailed to drive such stock as might be purchased.

In the meantime the infantry was not idle. As soon as the cavalry started, on the 28th, and from that time to the evening of the 31st, scattering in small squads, the men of the infantry scoured the country round about for mules and horses, on which to mount themselves. At one point a team of six mules, hitched to a wagon, was found, minus the driver, who had evidently seen the "blue coats" coming, and made himself invisible. Fearful that the team, if left too long alone, might get scared, run off and break the wagon, the Marines kindly took charge of the whole outfit, drove it in to the boats, and took care of it.

From one of the prisoners it had been learned that a force of Jackson's cavalry was headed for that country, to give protection to stock purchased by Captain Price, and the drivers in charge of it. Accordingly, on the 1st of November, with two days rations, one piece of artillery, his well-mounted cavalry, and his mule-mounted infantry, Colonel Currie, spoiling for a fight, set out in the face of a threatening rain, which finally descending rendered the roads, which wound through great swamps, well nigh impassable. About 3 p. m. the Buckner plantation, on Deer Creek, was reached, and the command went into camp, twenty-three miles distant from the boats. Inquiring of the citizens, and becoming convinced from all he could learn that there was no considerable hostile force in that vicinity, the Colonel divided his force, next morning, starting the artillery back to the river, under escort of the mule-mounted infantry, while he with the cavalry proceeded down Deer Creek, intending to strike the river at Carolina Landing, some sixty miles distant, where the ram HORNER had been previously instructed to meet him, on the 4th. But the Col-

onel had not gone more than a mile beyond his picket line of the previous night, when his advance guard began a lively skirmish with the enemy. A running fight ensued, until the Marines finally brought to bay a force of about one hundred and twenty Confederate cavalry. The enemy had taken their stand on the opposite side of a bridge, intending to dispute the passage of the Yankees over it. Colonel Currie instructed his men to crowd the enemy hard enough to hold them, and at the same time dispatched an orderly to find and bring back the artillery, enroute to the boats. But the Marines crowded a little too hard, and under their fire the enemy was evidently growing restless. Seeing this, Colonel Currie ordered a charge across the bridge, before which the enemy turned and precipitately fled. Colonel Currie followed them about two miles, when finding there was no other escape from the rear fire which came pelting into them, the Confederates took to the woods and cane brakes, on either side of the road. Being quite a distance from the river, with but a small force, (only about one-half the Brigade) the roads almost impassable from the recent rain, and not knowing what force might be concentrated upon him, Colonel Currie finally decided to return direct to the river, which he reached at 11 o'clock p. m., having marched forty miles that afternoon. On the way back, at the plantation of Dr. L. L. Taylor, were found a nice lot of fat hogs, which Captain Price had, just before his capture, purchased and paid twelve hundred and fifty dollars for. A team consisting of six oxen, hitched to a large cotton wagon (which had just returned from Catfish Landing, where it had been hauling goods for a Confederate Captain in order to cross them over into Arkansas)—was pressed into service, and the fat hogs were all transferred to the boats. At the same time a courier was sent to the commander of the ram HORNER, then at Greenville, instructing him to proceed to Catfish Landing, and look after the aforementioned goods and ferry. On the following day the commander of the HORNER reported the capture of a large quantity of salt, and the destruction of two large flats of sufficient carrying capacity to ferry artillery across the river. These flats were entirely new, and were ingeniously hidden away from view, by being sunk in about four feet of water, by means of barrels filled with sand, and they would probably never have been discovered by the Federals, had not their whereabouts been

revealed by a deserter from Price's army, who had come in and given himself up.

On the 5th the mule-mounted infantry was disembarked at Sunny Side, in charge of Major Tallerday, with instructions to proceed to Lake Village, the county seat of Chicot Co., Ark. On this scout Maj. Tallerday captured Captain Gainer and five enlisted men, all of the 23d Ala. Inf., evidently engaged in burning cotton, and enforcing the Confederate conscription, and with them also, some valuable stock. The rams HORNER and MOXARCH were now left at Greenville, for the protection of the transports passing by. On the 6th the cavalry under command of Capt. O. F. Brown, was put ashore at Gaines' Landing. He proceeded out into the country, in the direction of Monticello, Ark., for about fifteen miles, turned up the river, and met the fleet about 5 o'clock p. m., having captured only a few mules. At 8 o'clock the same evening Colonel Currie learned that some rebel cavalry were in camp about five miles back from the river, waiting an opportunity to cross over into Mississippi. A detachment of infantry, under Lieutenant Markle, was immediately sent out, and about ten o'clock the same night, returned with Lieutenant Brailsford and one enlisted man, both of Whitfield's Texas Legion, and having with them a considerable mail. On the 7th, the infantry was sent out from the same place, with orders to operate as companies, in scouting the country, from the river as far back as possible. These companies returned soon after dark, bringing with them some stock and several prisoners. Among the latter was a Confederate mail carrier, who was making his way to the river, with the intention of crossing that night. On the 8th, the cavalry, under Captain O. F. Brown, was put off at Glencoe, on the Mississippi shore, while the mule-mounted infantry, under Maj. Tallerday, was landed on the Arkansas shore, opposite. The cavalry came in at Bolivar Landing, late in the afternoon, having accomplished but little. The infantry continued up the river to Napoleon, where the fleet, as per previous agreement, met them, on the following day. They had captured quite a number of prisoners, among whom was a Confederate mail carrier, with over two hundred pounds of mail, in which were a large number of official documents from Richmond, directed to the most prominent Generals in the Trans-Mississippi Department. They also captured two men, Messrs. Barker and

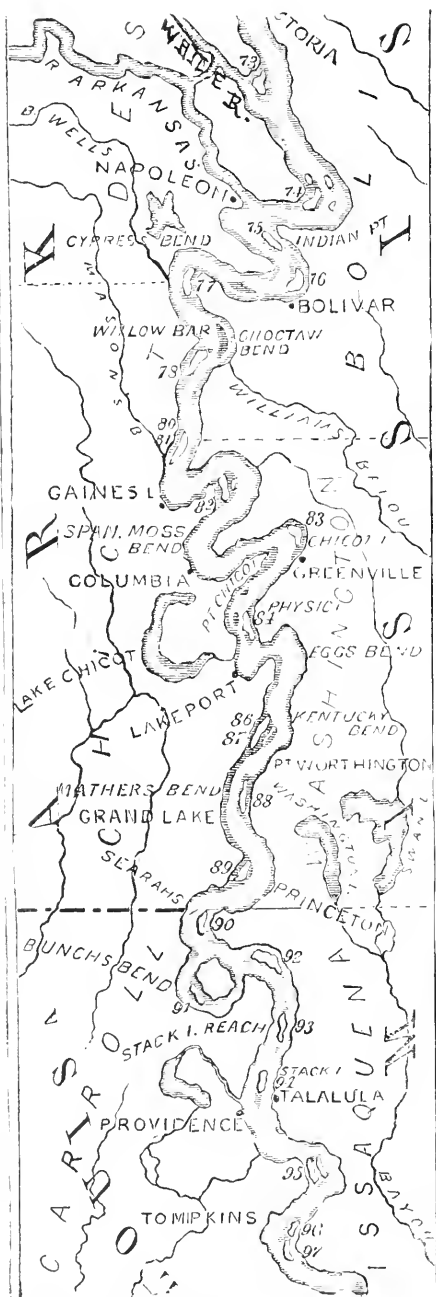


Diagram of the Mississippi River from Mouth of White River to Milliken's Bend.

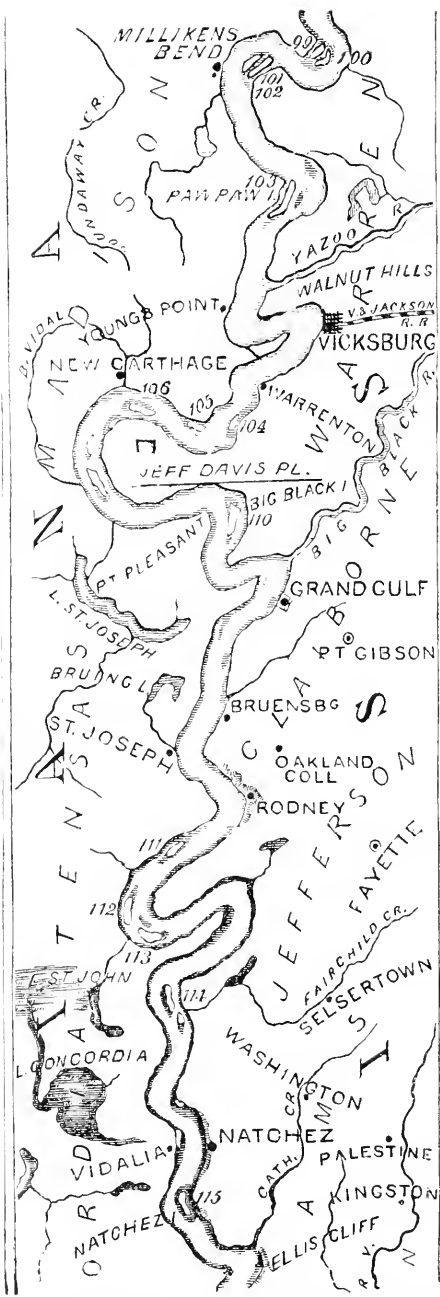


Diagram of the Mississippi River from Mil-
liken's Bend to Ellis' Cliff.

Keefe, cotton manufacturers, with a cotton machine, recently bought at Macon, Ga., at a cost of eight thousand dollars. They had crossed the river with their machine just a little while before their capture, and were enroute to Camden, Ark., where the machine was to be used in making cloth for the Confederate army.

Learning that the guerrillas had burned the steamer *Allen Collier*, where she landed opposite Laconia, Ark., a day or two before, Colonel Currie immediately left Napoleon, on the evening of the 9th, intending to ferret out this marauding party. Landing at the mouth of White river for wood, he found some of the *Collier's* crew, who had been taken prisoners at the time of the burning of their boat, and subsequently released. From them it was learned that the boat was burned by a Captain Montgomery, and a portion of his company, numbering some forty or fifty men, and that Montgomery owned a plantation on Bogue Phalia, in Bolivar County, Mississippi. Colonel Currie therefore went with his fleet to Beulah Landing, and on the morning of the 10th, with a small cavalry force, went to the bayou, some ten miles distant, where he arrested one of Montgomery's men, and learned from him that the company was hidden away in the canebrakes. Knowing the folly of attempting to follow Montgomery, under such circumstances, Colonel Currie at once went to Montgomery's plantation, where he found the "mansion house," occupied by the families of Captain Montgomery, and Gen. Charles Clark, of the C. S. A. The furniture was soon removed and the house burned. The cotton-gin, and all other buildings, except the negro quarters, also went up in smoke. Mrs. Montgomery was then informed that this was in retaliation for the burning of the *Allen Collier*, by her husband and his men, and she replied: "This is no more than I expected when I heard what my husband had done." Word was also left for the members of her husband's company, that another guerrilla depredation on their part would put the lighted torch to their own dwellings. On the way to the river, Colonel Currie destroyed numerous yawls and flat boats, found in the canebrakes along the road, which at night were hauled out, conveyed to the river, and used in ferrying men, mail, provisions, and munitions of war, across the Father of Waters. On this same trip also quite a number of prisoners were taken, among them three mail carriers, each having a small mail des-

tined for Arkansas. The Marines reached their fleet at Bolivar Landing, about dark, after a march of about forty-five miles. During these operations, large quantities of corn in cribs, and hundreds of acres of corn in the fields still ungathered, were seen. Several small trading boats were also detected along the river, dealing in cotton and furnishing the citizens with supplies.

But the reader must not be permitted to forget that part of the fleet which was away up stream. It was, of course, not to be expected, while the boats lay tugging at their anchors as though impatient to join their companions below, or were hauled high upon the ways, where they were being planked and caulked, plated and hammered, repaired and renovated, that items of startling interest would be heard from them. The time of their stay at Cairo, Paducah, and Mound City, however, was not spent in idleness, by the officers and men with them. The General and his staff were perhaps never, at any time in the history of the command, busier than now. They were making far-reaching preparation for the future, hedging against some of the embarrassments hitherto experienced in the operations of the fleet, strengthening the command by way of fresh recruits, and thus laying the foundation for greater efficiency in the days to come.

It is one of the many curious disclosures, by the publication of the archives, that at this date was sent a dispatch from the Secretary of the Navy to Admiral Porter, in response to an inquiry from him, giving that officer his first knowledge of the actual transfer of the Brigade from his control to that of Grant, and also declaring that it had been made without the knowledge of his department. Here is the dispatch:

NAVY DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D. C., October 21, 1863.

Admiral D. D. Porter:—

Sir:—I have received your No. 160, and inclosures, in reference to the Marine Brigade. You were informed, a day or two since, of the transfer of the Brigade to Major General Grant, without the knowledge of this department. Your connection with it has ceased, and of course you will not interfere with its movements.

Very Respectfully, etc.

GIDEON WELLES,

Secretary of Navy.

On the 30th of October, telegraphic news came to the Flagship *ARROCRAT*, that Col. Charles R. Ellet had died, suddenly and unexpectedly, at the home of his uncle, Dr. E. C. Ellet, in Bunker Hill, Illinois. Charles Rivers Ellet was the only son of Col. Charles Ellet, Jr., the builder of the rams, and was one of the youngest officers of his rank in the army. At the time he entered the service, he was a Medical Cadet at Georgetown College, Virginia. He was a young man of brilliant mind, and had received a thorough education. He was tall in person, reserved and dignified in his bearing, and, like all the Ellets, was endowed with a courage that knew no limit. Twice he ran the batteries at Vicksburg, the first time in command of the *QUEEN OF THE WEST*, February 2, 1863, and the second time in command of the *SWITZERLAND*, March 25th, of the same year. He was subsequently placed in command of the 1st Infantry of the Marine Brigade, but being unfamiliar with tactics he was but little known as the active commander of the regiment. The loss of the *QUEEN* under his command up Red River, cast a shadow upon his young life, from which he never fully emerged. His daring deeds, recorded in this history, and even more fully in the annals of his country, are his enduring monument. His remains were buried beside those of his illustrious father, in Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia.

On Nov. 3d, instructions were received through the Adjutant General's department for regular monthly reports to the War office. On the 16th the *RAMNE*, then undergoing repairs at Mound City, barely escaped destruction by fire. The fire was the result of culpable carelessness or ignorance, on the part of one of her mates, who put a pail of pitch on the stove in the cook house, and then went away and left it for some time, unwatched. It boiled over and caught fire, the flames burning the floor and ceiling all out before they could be extinguished. The boat was saved with the greatest difficulty.

November 18th, a Marine soldier, Joseph Heller, was shot and killed in the bar-room of the St. Charles Hotel, in Cairo. He was intoxicated and got into a brawl, declaiming against two paroled Confederate officers, who were also drinking and carousing. There was an altercation between Heller and the officer of the day, who ordered the officer of the guard to arrest him. Heller made some resistance, when the Lieutenant drew his revolver and shot him, and he

fell heavily forward on his face, the blood gushing from his nose and mouth, dead. The Post Commander was present, and placed the officer who did the shooting under arrest, and later in the day promised the Assistant Adjutant General of the Brigade to investigate the matter, but it was never known that anything was done about it. This act, was, to say the least little short of outright murder, and the murderer should have suffered for it. There were the Commander of the Post, the officer of the day, and the officer of the guard, and yet all of them could not arrest a drunken soldier without killing him. Respecting the presence in such a place, at the same time, of three of the leading executive officers of the Post, no comment is necessary. Heller was a brave, and faithful soldier, well liked in his own company, and by all in the Brigade who knew him, and his needless and pitiful death was a lesson on the one bad habit leading to his end.

That part of the fleet which was operating below, our narrative left on November 19th, in the neighborhood of Napoleon. Between that date and the 19th, almost daily scouting went on, upon both sides of the river, in that vicinity. On the evening of the 18th, the fleet was called again to Goodrich Landing, where it remained until the 27th. During this time the colored garrison was in a constant state of excitement, and the Marines made daily scouts. The little town of Floyd was twice visited. In one of these scouts, within a mile of the town, the cavalry surprised a picket post of the enemy, and in the skirmish, five or six prisoners with their arms were taken. In this affair one horse belonging to Co. B, Cav., was wounded, another threw his rider and got away. While on their return to the river the accidental discharge of a carbine, in the hands of one of the men, wounded still another horse.

Of Goodrich Landing affairs, in a communication to General Grant, under date of November 22d, General McPherson said: "General Hawkins has had an alarm once a week regularly, at Goodrich Landing." This was a chronic case, in which frequent prescriptions of "Marine Brigade," even in large doses, gave only temporary relief.

Between the 27th and the 4th of December the Brigade descended the river, stopping to scout at various points, with no very important results. Many of these scouts were attended with striking incidents,

the particulars of which would be interesting reading, but only a few are preserved. One is thus told by Sergeant J. N. Prouty of Co. I, Inf.: "While at Greenville, it was learned that the Tom Hines plantation, three or four miles in the country, was a great resort for rebel officers and soldiers, coming and going, and Sergeant Wm. A. Lyster and myself slipped off the *BALRIC* unobserved, and wandered out there. While talking to the two girls, on the veranda, a man in rebel uniform with a pair of saddle bags on his arm hove in sight, and we made for him. He dodged around and ran into a cabin, and tried to hide his saddle bags and escape the back way, but we got him. A few minutes later another appeared and was so surprised he made no resistance, and the two, with the owner of the premises, were marched as prisoners back to the *BALRIC*. There was another chap we wanted to take along—a fine young black bear—but we couldn't manage it, and a later trip was made for him. He wasn't turned over to the officer of the day, as the other prisoners had been, but was provided with good quarters and plenty of rations. He was afterwards known as Sergeant Prouty's bear, and was soon a pet with the soldiers, ranging at will over the *BALRIC*. He frequently had disputes with the colored roustabouts. Sometimes when the boat was at a landing he would take the gang plank to land, walk down into the river, take a bath, shake himself well, and come aboard again. Captain Conner of the *MOXARCH* also had a bear of a lighter color and less grit. Whenever we happened to lay alongside the *MOXARCH* we had a bear fight, which generally resulted in Captain Conner's bear climbing the jackstaff in great haste. Some months later I was sent up the river in charge of a detail with a lot of prisoners to Cairo. When I returned to the *BALRIC* the bear was nowhere to be found. I was informed that a young Lieutenant, related to the General, came aboard one day with an order for that bear, and took him aboard the *AUTOCRAT*."

Though "nowhere to be found" on the *BALRIC*, Mr. Bear was in evidence some months later, on the wharf at Vicksburg, as the following clipping from a newspaper of that period, preserved by some member of the Brigade, seems to show:

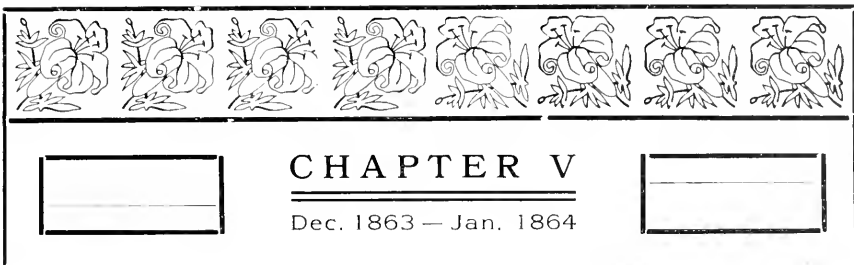
OUR FRIEND BRUIN.



Among the most important personages disbanded with the Marine Brigade is Mr. Bruin, who has so long exercised authority on the Autocrat. Yesterday morning his bearship was escorted up the levee by a strong guard, who had as much as they could do to prevent him from showing his powerful affections. He first tried to hug a cow, who apparently not appreciating his kindly advances, seemed inclined to give him a horn. Discretion, however, assuming sway, she modestly retreated, leaving Mr. B. master of the situation.

In order that the Sergeant may yet be able to identify his lost property, our artist has sketched Bruin as he appeared, making his way up the levee.

On the 4th of December all the vessels of the lower fleet, were once more at the wharf at Vicksburg.



Campaigning With Gresham. Hide and Seek With Wirt Adams. A Question "Who Escaped?" Scouting in the Natchez District. Capture of the Sall Wagons. Col. Currie's Close Call. Intercepted Mails. Gathering Cordurood. Prisoners a Plenty. Loss of a Picket Post. Court Martial Sentences. Rebels in Hiding. A Jubilee Scene. Fatal Encounter of Lieutenant Kirk. A Running Fight and Narrow Escape. A Story and a Joke on the General. The Yawl Expedition.

Early in December (1863) the enemy again became specially active below Vicksburg, and particularly about Natchez, where General Wirt Adams was threatening an attack with a considerable force. Toward this point the Brigade, under Colonel Currie, in company with other troops, some of which were carried on the Marine boats, and others upon transports, all under command of General Gresham, were hurried away, early on the morning of December 5.

At Grand Gulf, opposite which a gunboat lay, warning was given to look out for an attack from the Mississippi shore, particularly in the vicinity of Rodney. Preparations were accordingly made for a fight at that place. The artillery was put in readiness to cover the landing of troops, and the horses of the cavalry and the mules of the infantry were saddled and bridled, ready to be quickly disembarked and mounted. As the fleet passed the point of expected attack some scattered individuals, supposed to be confederate scouts, were seen but no attack was made. Natchez was reached at 5 o'clock p. m., where it was reported that the Confederates had appeared in considerable force, some six miles in rear of the city, and that an attack might be expected at any moment. At one o'clock the same

night, the Marines were aroused from their slumbers, given orders to feed and saddle their animals, and make all needful preparations for a two day's march. They were not, however, sent ashore until some time after daylight. Soon after daylight a detachment of the Marine cavalry was sent out on the Washington road, which runs nearly due east from Natchez, to reconnoitre, and it was found that the enemy had disappeared from that vicinity. General Gresham, thinking that they had withdrawn in a northeasterly direction, sent the Marine Brigade (all mounted) with four pieces of artillery, out upon the Fayette road, in search of them. This detachment moved some six or seven miles without finding any trace of the retreating column. While resting here, and holding a consultation, General Ellet and staff—just returned from Cairo—came galloping up to join the command, and were received with rousing cheers. They had come from Natchez in hot haste, expecting that the enemy would be found, and eager to participate in the fight. After General Ellet reached the command he pushed forward about fifteen miles. But neither the enemy, nor Gresham's cavalry, which was sent out early in the morning with instructions to form a junction with the Brigade at a certain point on the road, were to be found. Accordingly the General moved southward, to a point on the Washington road, six miles east of Natchez, where he learned that the Federal cavalry had been in that vicinity early in the forenoon, and finding that the enemy had gone still further southward, had pushed on in that direction, hoping either to come upon him, or failing in this to join the main infantry force which General Gresham had himself led out on the Palestine road. It was now nearly night. All plans seemed to have miscarried. The forces were separated without certain knowledge of each other's whereabouts, and General Ellet deemed it best in this situation of things to return to Natchez, which he did.

The Brigade, however, was hardly fairly in its quarters on the boats, when two of General Gresham's staff came to General Ellet, informing him that Gresham was camped on the enemy's trail, some twenty miles southeast of Natchez. Adams had gone in the direction of Ellis' Cliff, and it was now Gresham's plan to have the Marine Brigade more down to that point, by ten o'clock in the morning, and disembarking, attack General Adams from the river direction, while

he himself attacked from the other side, and thus crush the enemy between the upper and nether millstones.

The Brigade was at Ellis' Cliff at the appointed hour. In the meantime, very early in the morning, Gresham had sent his cavalry entirely past General Adams, and had seized the only road by which the Confederates could escape to the southeast. But when Gresham moved up to the attack, it was found that the wily Adams was moving his force back toward Natchez, on the Woodville road. Gresham at once sent a second courier to General Ellet, requesting him to quickly reembark his Brigade and hurry back to Natchez, and there landing his troops, come down on the Woodville road, and thus it was thought Adams would surely be trapped. General Ellet again complied with Gresham's request, with the greatest possible dispatch. But lo and behold, while the Marines were marching southward on the Woodville road, momentarily expecting to encounter Adams' force, about two o'clock p. m., their advance suddenly came upon General Gresham's advance; Adams and his force had eluded his pursuers, not having been sighted by either command. It was afterward learned that Adams moved only a short distance toward Natchez, on the Woodville road, and then turned abruptly east, on the Kingston road, and so the jaws of the troop came together with a snap, without even catching the fox's tail. Adams' escape was of course a disappointment to the Federals. But while he could congratulate himself on a narrow escape, he must have felt somewhat chagrined at his failure to capture Natchez, which at the time of his raid, was defended by only a small garrison, which but for the timely reinforcement, by Gresham and Ellet, might have proven an easy and rich capture to him.

Of this however, the reader may be better able to judge, after hearing from the other side. General Adams' own report of these movements furnish some interesting variations. His raid to the Mississippi was for the double purpose of interrupting navigation, and surprising and capturing the garrison at Natchez. He marched his cavalry (from Gallatin) toward Natchez, December 1, being joined by Colonel Wood's cavalry at Union Church, next day. Their effective force was stated to be 1,059 men. They reached the vicinity of Natchez on the afternoon of the 4th, and halted to learn the condi-

tion of the garrison, and prospect of capturing it. Learning (he says) that it was "strongly fortified, and was garrisoned by 1,200 white, and 1,500 negro troops, with six heavy guns commanding all the practicable approaches"—with many other lions in the way—he concluded—to move on down to Ellis' Cliff, and try his luck on the passing transports. He reached the Cliff, after noon of 5th, only to find a Yankee gunboat stationed there. But, selecting a "favorable position" for the battery, and getting ready for business, he waited—that evening and all night. [During night two boats passed, but he didn't think it worth while to try to hit them in the darkness]. So, all next day, with not a transport to shoot at, in daylight, and at seven p. m., news came of the arrival of re-inforcements at Natchez—"two brigades, one of infantry and one of cavalry," and conjecturing that they were after him, and would likely try to seize the "only two routes of egress," he concluded to move on again. Hearing that a cavalry force had already marched down on the Kingston road, and was within four miles of his camp, and would have an "infantry and artillery force in addition, to attack him in the morning," he says he got his command ready to attack, and force his way through the Federal cavalry, before their re-inforcements could be brought up. As his story is now coming to the interesting point, we will quote his own words: "With this view," he says, "I kept the two roads, from Kingston and Natchez, strongly picketed during the night, and moved my "whole force and trains, by a plantation road, to within a mile of his "position." He then, in the darkness planned the attack, and wonderful victory, which he describes thus: "The enemy occupied a very "strong position along the crest of a ridge east of the creek, with a "broad slope and open field toward the direction of our approach, "thus completely commanding the road along which I was moving. "But after a slight skirmish with the 11th Arkansas regiment, dismounted and deployed, under the gallant Colonel Griffith, and a few "artillery shots, the enemy gave way and fled, with great precipitation "in the direction of Natchez. I ordered the 14th Confederate and "Stockdale's battalion in pursuit. These commands followed at a "gallop for six or eight miles, but such was the rapidity of his flight "that they killed and captured but few. Guns, haversacks, shoes, "poultry, etc., were picked up along the road by which they escaped."

The "escape" of Gresham's force, from this ferocious pursuit, by Adams and his men, had the remarkable effect of landing the latter at Kingston, sixteen miles from Natchez, from which point the above report of this affair was written the same day, December 7. General Ellet, on the 8th, reported his various movements to General McPherson, and of the outcome, says: "I at once returned | from Ellis' Cliff | and marched out from Natchez, on the Woodville road, and met General Gresham returning, after his arduous chase—the enemy having eluded him and escaped by the Washington road." Here was a manifest misunderstanding as to which side did the "escaping," which must be left to the decision of the reader. The General remarked in closing: "We have given Mr. Adams something of a bad scare, for he was at last accounts in full retreat, not having fulfilled his purpose of taking Natchez."

But from Kingston, on the 8th, Adams again moved toward the river, burning cotton plantations and removing negroes, as he proceeded, north of Natchez. On the evening of the 8th, General Gresham, having heard of the presence of a hostile force out on the Liberty road, requested General Ellet to send out a reconnoitering party the next day, and in compliance with with the request the Marine cavalry battalion was sent out early on the morning of the 9th. After going as far as Kingston, it returned late the same evening, without finding any enemy. On the 9th a change was made in the quartering of the troops on the boats, the infantry henceforward to occupy three boats exclusively, and the cavalry two boats. Two mountain howitzers, each to be drawn by a mule in thills, were also equipped and mounted, to operate hereafter with the mounted forces. The DIANA rejoined the fleet at Natchez, and thus the fighting force of the Brigade was once more together, with the hospital boat, WOODFORD, still remaining above. About this date the resignation of Major Hubbard was tendered.

On the 10th the Command moved up stream some ten or twelve miles, and spent the day in taking on wood from the Mississippi shore. General Ellet went to Vicksburg with the AUROREAR, to confer with General McPherson, leaving the command to scout the country from Waterproof Landing to Lake St. Joseph. On the 11th the mounted force left Waterproof about ten o'clock a. m. It consisted of two com-

panies of cavalry and four companies of mounted infantry, under Major Tallerdav. Passing through the town, the command moved out into the country, and soon overtook a train of thirty-six wagons drawn by mule teams, on their way to some salt works in the vicinity, to secure salt for the Confederate army. It is needless to say that the right and title to that wagon train was quickly transferred to Uncle Sam. About sundown the boats were seen coming up the river, and were hailed to shore, and the command went aboard and slept in their quarters. As the result of this day's operations, about eighty horses and mules were captured, together with quite a number of prisoners, among whom was a Confederate sergeant, belonging to one of their signal corps.

The men went to bed that night with orders to be ready for another raid early in the morning. Sunrise of the 12th saw the mounted infantry, with companies C and D Cavalry, under command of Colonel Currie, again on the road. The column reached and passed through the village of St. Joseph, about ten o'clock. A force, said to be 200 strong, was reported to be in the neighborhood, and different portions of the command were sent out in various directions, but with the exception of here and there an individual straggler, no enemy was seen. At night the command returned to the boats at St. Joseph, the scout having proved one of the hardest the Brigade had ever known. About \$2,000 worth of plug tobacco, additional quantities of salt, and quite a lot of clothing and trappings belonging to Confederate officers, found in the houses where they were visiting, and from which they precipitately fled upon the approach of the Marines, were the trophies of the day. While out with a portion of his command Major Hubbard of the cavalry, came across a Southerner on horseback, with a negro handcuffed and chained to his saddle, trudging along in the dust and heat. The Major promptly released the negro, and transferred the handcuffs to the wrists of the planter.

Under orders now received from General McPherson, the Brigade was directed to devote its attention to the river below, as far as Natchez. The 13th was granted the men and their animals for much needed rest, and for the cleaning of arms, etc., etc. During that night the Flagship *AUTOCRAT*, and the Quartermaster boat *FAIRCHILD*, having returned from Vicksburg, the entire fleet again dropped down

the river to Rodney. Orders were also received on this day, from General McPherson, directing the exchange of mules for horses, and for the full and proper mounting of the infantry. Upon arrival at Rodney, Company B Inf. was sent out on a reconnoissance. Toward noon, this company returned with the report that they had come upon, and had had a brush with, the Confederate pickets, and that a large force of the enemy was said to be back of the town. The command was hurriedly served with dinner, and then moved out, the cavalry taking the Fayette road, and the mounted infantry the Port Gibson road. A short distance from the river, a Confederate officer, reported to be a Captain and Assistant Adjutant General, was captured by the infantry, and at a house some distance from the road, another officer was taken. A few miles further on the darkies reported a train of fleeing Confederates, moving to a place of greater safety. Pursuit was given, and this "train," when overtaken, was discovered to be conveying household goods only. The stuff was thoroughly searched, but no arms, ammunition, or contraband goods of any kind were found.

During the day the cavalry swam a bayou, and had a sharp encounter with the enemy, and captured a Confederate mail, in charge of a commissioned officer. The infantry pushed out, to within two or three miles of Port Gibson, without encountering any hostile force, and then, as night was coming on, and they were some twenty miles from their boats, began a countermarch. On their return trip one of those singular incidents, which often occur in war, took place. A small squad of the enemy struck the main road near a house which our advance guard had but recently passed. The people in the house, having in the darkness mistaken the Marine advance guard for the main column, reported to the Confederates that the Marines had all returned to their boats. The squad accordingly re-established its picket post of the morning, at this place, expecting soon to be reinforced by another detachment. Riding at the head of his column, Colonel Currie came suddenly upon this squad, and called out sharply, "Who are you?" The answer came back—"Confederates—Who are you?" Colonel Currie replied, "I am Colonel Currie of the Marine Brigade. Surrender!" Scarcely had his words been uttered when a Confederate volley was fired, and the bullets went whizzing past the Colonel's head. In the melee which ensued, one Confederate was

killed, and several others captured. A Marine's diary descriptive of this affair, says "The Major commanding this Confederate squad was killed, and his body was seen by a number of our men in passing." It was afterward reported that the officer commanding the squad escaped. Some one was mistaken. This much, however, is certain: the result of the day's operations was the capture of a Confederate mail, one of the enemy killed, and fifteen captured. On this date also, signal stations on each side the river, with the officers in charge of both, together with their outfits, were gobbled by our men.

On the 15th another inspection of the Command was held, in order to ascertain the number and character of animals on hand. Saddles, bridles and other equipments were issued to such of the men as needed them, and these were fitted and made ready for service. The hospital boat *Woodruff* joined the fleet during the day. In the evening orders were issued for the Command to be ready at daylight the next morning, with rations sufficient for two days. Owing, however, to heavy rain during the night and early morning, the Brigade did not disembark until about nine o'clock a. m., of the 16th, and then it moved out under command of Colonel Currie. As on the previous day, the infantry and cavalry moved over two different roads, and came together again, where the road running east from Rodney crosses the road running from Natchez to Port Gibson. It rained most of the day, making the scout a particularly hard one for both men and animals. During the trip one detachment of infantry came upon a small Confederate shoe factory and tannery. The shoes manufactured were of a very rough quality, the natural color of the leather as it was tanned, and were sold for about \$8.00 per pair. There were two white shoemakers, who were taken away as prisoners. The cavalry reported that they had been fired on several times during the day, and that they drove in the pickets of a force reported to be 1,000 strong. They did not, however, feel themselves strong enough to bring on a general engagement. Upon this same day General McPherson sent to General Grant a report of operations in that locality, from which we take the following:

HEADQUARTERS 15th A. C.

Vicksburg, Miss., December 16, 1863.

General U. S. Grant:

* * * I inclose herewith report of Col. Farrow, and also a report from

Brigadier General Ellet, showing the Mississippi Marine Brigade in connection with our forces under Gresham. * * * There has been some firing on boats in vicinity of Rodney; nothing very serious, however. With the force of cavalry now at Natchez, and the Marine Brigade, I think I will be able to keep the river clear, within my jurisdiction. * * *

J. B. McPHERSON.

The hospital boat *Woodford* was now directed to report and remain, subject to orders, at Vicksburg.

On the 17th the *DIXIE* and *ADAMS* moved up to St. Joseph, principally to secure forage, while the rest of the command on these boats was securing this, companies F. and E. Inf. were sent out scouting. They captured one Confederate Captain, and some seven or eight enlisted men, belonging to the Confederate signal service. While the balance of the command was at Rodney, a party of Confederates ran in upon our pickets, in the edge of the town, and killed one man, Private Smith, of Co. D Cavalry. Part of the force was immediately sent out, and had a light skirmish with the enemy. It was thought that the rebels were showing special activity just at that time, to attract attention and employ the Marine Brigade, while arms were being crossed over elsewhere, to the west side of the river. The ram *SWITZERLAND* was ordered to Natchez with dispatches, and to secure more saddles. Later in the day the boats at Rodney moved up opposite St. Joseph, for wood, and the fleet was thus again all together. On the 18th teams were secured in the vicinity, and this day, and the next, were spent in hauling in wood for fuel, for the boats. While here, a plot, formed for the escape of the prisoners, was discovered. The guard was strengthened, thus frustrating the plan and preventing the attempt being carried out. Here also, an effort was made to surprise our picket post, but it was likewise a failure.

On the 19th the *ADAMS* was sent to Vicksburg with the prisoners, and dispatches. The guards over the prisoners were further strengthened, and every needed precaution taken, to prevent escape. On the 20th the *ADAMS*, at Vicksburg, turned over her prisoners, thirty-five in number, among whom were one Major, three Captains, one Assistant Adjutant General, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, one Corporal, and twenty-six privates. Having received dispatches, and drawn some saddles and other equipments, the *ADAMS* returned to the fleet, opposite St. Joseph, which was reached about midnight.

The following, from the recently published archives, shows that there was no mistake in suspecting a rebel signal post at the Daniel's place, and planning for its capture:

Near St. Joseph, La., October 9, 1863.

Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Lee, Commanding Cavalry Division:

General: Major General Taylor directed me to proceed to this point, to establish a line of signals connecting with the eastern side by the Mississippi. I have established the line at this point, and the station on your side of the river will be found at Mrs. Smith Daniel's house (which is situated 2 miles back of Bruinsburg). Any important communication for Generals Taylor or Smith can be sent by this line. General Taylor would be under many obligations if, when there is any important news, you would send him an official dispatch concerning it, by way of the signal station at Mrs. Daniel's.

Very respectfully,

STEPHEN M. ROUTH,

Lieut. and Chief of Signal Corps, District of West La.

While the ADAMS was at Vicksburg, a scouting party was sent out to the Daniels plantation, and captured three Confederate Lieutenants, and three enlisted men, recently from Mobile. At night an excursion of four companies of cavalry, under Major Hubbard, was sent to a Confederate crossing, some five miles above, where it was hoped to make some captures, but the party returned about two o'clock next morning, having met with no success. On the 21st, the ADAMS and BALRIC crossed over to St. Joseph, and sent out a reconnoitering party. It was learned by this party that a Confederate force, under command of one Harris, was about ten miles distant.

During their trip, Marine scouts overtook a Confederate Lieutenant, who, seeing he could not escape, stood still until the Marines came near, and then raised his gun and fired at them, at short range. Fortunately he missed his aim, and the men quickly closed in upon and captured him. It was a wonder they did not kill him on the spot. Report was also brought in to the command, that a battery, loaded upon a barge, was hidden in Bayou Pierre, near Bruinsburg. The ram *MONARCH* was at once sent up there, to lie off the mouth of the bayou, and Colonel Currie was ordered to be ready with his boat to move up to that place, in the morning. But at half past one o'clock a. m., of the 22nd, the following dispatch was received by General Ellet, which entirely changed the plan:

Natchez, December 21, 1863.

Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet:

I will start today at 2 o'clock with three regiments of infantry, four pieces of artillery and two hundred cavalry for Fayette. I will be at Fayette by 7 or 8 o'clock tomorrow, and attack Wirt Adams if he stands. I would be glad of your co-operation from Rodney.

W. Q. GRESHAM.

The fleet at once dropped down to Rodney, and about five o'clock a. m., companies C, D, E, F, H, and I, of the mounted infantry, and the whole battalion of cavalry, accompanied by the two mountain howitzers, each drawn by two large mules, went out to join General Gresham. A short distance from Fayette, the infantry's rear guard was impetuously attacked, and driven toward the main body: Colonel Currie, who was in command, at once ordered the howitzers to the rear, and prepared for battle. One or two rounds, however, from the little "Marine bull dogs," loaded with canister, cooled the ardor of the Confederates. It was in the beginning of this rear attack, that Corporal Isaac W. McCoy was captured by the enemy. A. W. Bellows, of Co. E Inf., a participant in the fray, gave this account of it: "We left the boats that morning early. I think nearly the whole command, the cavalry in the advance. We had the small howitzers, and our company was rear guard under Lieut. Snyder. Six of us were sent, with a recruiting officer for colored troops, and when we came to a fine plantation, some twenty rods from the road, while the command moved on, our squad went with the recruiting officer to the house. We approached through a large open gate, and soon a lot of rebels came running out of the barn, and timber near by, and began shooting at us. We were soon nearly surrounded, but made for the rear, across an open meadow, through which ran a big ditch, which our horses cleared all right, except Corporal McCoy's. He was mounted on a mule which couldn't, or wouldn't, jump it. Poor McCoy fell into the hands of the enemy. He was a noble fellow, and we were sorry to lose him." The records show that Corporal McCoy died in Andersonville prison, some months later. The sergeant of the same recruiting squad, named Carr (belonging to some other command) was missing, and was supposed to have been captured at the same time. He had on his person, at the time, papers setting forth his mission. In a scout made by the command on the 26th, it was re-

ported by a woman who resided in Grand Gulf, that two men, captured on the 22d, (probably McCoy and Carr) had been confined in the jail at that place, for a couple of days, and that one of them was taken out on Christmas Day, and hanged. This doubtless was Carr. The papers found on his person sealed his fate.

The 23rd was spent on board the fleet, some further changes being made in the location of the troops on the boats, and in preparing to send the ADAMS to Cairo for repairs, and to take up prisoners, and a recruiting detail. During that night the Marine picket, detailed from companies I and G Inf., and stationed in the rear of Rodney, was pounced upon and captured. This unfortunate occurrence was, without doubt, the result of most culpable carelessness. It seems that only one man was on post at the time, while all the rest were asleep. About two o'clock in the morning, a squad of mounted Confederates made a dash upon the post. The man on guard, Edwin Moon, fired upon the approaching foe, but without checking their advance, and the reckless sleepers were given no time to arouse themselves and prepare for resistance, before the enemy were upon them. Moon, though wounded in the leg, was the only one to escape. The Marine loss was one man killed, two wounded, one of whom was left on the field, and eight taken prisoners. At four o'clock a. m. of the 24th, the fleet left Rodney, and proceeding up the river, landed below Grand Gulf, on the Louisiana side, where it spent that day, and the next.

Christmas was remembered in various ways by the officers and men of the fleet. In his notes of the day in his diary, Sergeant De Coster says: "Had a good dinner, and some splendid egg nogg." There is no reasonable doubt as to the other ingredients, but it might be puzzling to inquire of the sergeant—where he obtained the eggs. A. J. Pierce, in his diary, says: "We made an attempt to celebrate the day by the time-honored custom of a sumptuous dinner, having 'pickled pork, in place of smoked side meat, which the boys call 'sow-belly'"! A merry Christmas, indeed!

Orders were now issued for a scout on the morrow (26th) from Grand Gulf to Bruinsburg, around by Port Gibson. To reach Port Gibson, it was necessary to cross Bayou Pierre. The bridge over this stream had been burned, and the main ford, where it was supposed a crossing might be effected, was found impassable, necessitating quite

a circuit to another. This second ford was found difficult, but finally companies A and B Cavalry succeeded in getting across, and were ordered to go to the town, some three miles distant, and ascertain what was there. As the two companies approached the town, fire was opened upon them from the corners of the streets, from behind fences, and out of the windows of the houses. Not knowing how much force the enemy had, and with an almost impassable bayou between them and their main force, the cavalry checked up and waited for reinforcements. In the meantime the other two companies of cavalry had crossed the bayou, and hastening forward, the whole battalion charged, driving the Confederates pell-mell through the town, and some three miles into the country. While this was going on, the entire command crossed over, and moved into the town. Finding, however, that the force here was only a small one, and it being late in the day, the return to the fleet was shortly begun.

When about a mile on the return, a small body of the enemy, concealed in the thick woods on the left, opened fire, but a few rounds from the howitzer dispersed them, and eight o'clock p. m., found the command back on the boats, tired and hungry. The only casualty of the day was the wounding of one cavalry man. One horse was run down, in pursuing the enemy, and was shot. One Confederate was known to have been wounded.

From December 26th to January 1st, 1864, the fleet remained at Grand Gulf, partly from lack of fuel, and partly for the muster and pay of the command. On the 29th of December, Sergeant DeCoster was assigned to quarters on the *RAIXE*, to act as Lieutenant and Adjutant of the Cavalry battalion. On the evening of January 1st, '64, the Flagship *ATROCITY* started for Vicksburg, leaving the rest of the fleet at Grand Gulf. While General Ellet was in Vicksburg, arrangements were made to send the *FAIRMILD* to New Orleans, carrying General McPherson and staff. On the morning of the 2nd, the fleet ran down to Bruinsburg. There the infantry and three companies of cavalry, were put ashore, under command of Major Tallerdlay, while the boats passed on down to Rodney, there to be met again by the disembarked troops. On this trip, though a few shots were exchanged with the enemy, no encounter occurred. The expedition reached the boats, bringing with them four prisoners, and thirteen head of beef

cattle, of which the command stood in sore need. In the evening, orders were given for the command to be ready for another expedition on the morrow. At six o'clock on the morning of the 3rd, the fleet moved across the river, and the command led off. It was found that the battery of field guns could not be gotten across the barge, along side the boat on which it was, and so it was left behind. The boats in the meantime passed on down to Waterproof Landing, there to await the coming of the troops, which occurred about three o'clock in the afternoon. On their scout a portion of the command sighted the enemy, and shots were exchanged between them, but nothing more. Later in the day a quantity of corn was found and confiscated for the horses. At eight o'clock in the evening the AUTOCRAT came down from Vicksburg. The forenoon of the 4th being unpleasant and drizzly, the troops remained on board. During the day the FAIRCLOUD passed by, on her New Orleans trip.

During the forenoon of the 5th, another administration of severe but necessary discipline occurred. The sentences of three men, recently tried by Court Martial, were read to the command—called into line for that purpose.

The first offender, charged with the use of disrespectful language to his superiors, was sentenced to three month's hard labor with ball and chain, on the Vicksburg fortification; the second, for seditious language and threatening to kill his Orderly Sergeant, was sentenced to twelve month's labor on the fortifications; the third, for desertion, was sentenced to three years on the fortifications. As Comrade Pierce in his diary said, at the time: "Here was a warning to the unruly, for certain."

At one o'clock p. m., the fleet sailed for Natchez, stopping on the way for two hours, to wood up. During the downward run the RAINE got fast on a sand bar, where she remained until 3 p. m. of the 6th, when the BALTIC went to her rescue, and pulled her off. Early on the morning of the 7th, the cavalry, accompanied by the mountain howitzer, went out some twelve miles into the country, reaching Hamburg, Miss., at three o'clock p. m. From there they went toward Fayette, camping all night six miles distant from the city. During the day seven confederate prisoners were captured, and the next morning the battalion returned to the fleet.

On the 10th the fleet moved up to Bruinsburg, where the *HORNER* was met, with a tow of coal, of which the boats stood in great need. While coaling at Bruinsburg on the 11th, a portion of the mounted infantry, under Major Tallerdav, went ashore, and rode out as far as Oakland College, being instructed to return by way of Rodney. While they were out, as a matter of precaution, the *MONARCH* was sent down to notify the gunboat at anchor there, of the expected arrival of our infantry at that point, lest, mistaking them for Confederates, she open fire upon them. The result of the scout was some eight prisoners. The afternoon of the same day an infantry detachment went out on the Louisiana side, under command of Captain Newell, of Co. A, to destroy some skiffs, said to be kept on Bruin's Lake, and transferred by wagons from lake to river, to be used in ferrying Confederates with despatches, mail, etc., back and forth, by night. During the trip an amusing incident (viewed from the Federal standpoint) took place. Captain Newell with his company dashed up suddenly to a house, and the residents were taken completely by surprise. The captain quickly dismounted and went in. Confronting the owner of the house he asked, "Have you any rebel soldiers here?" "No," said the planter, "none! The only man, except myself, is that old gentleman. And Sir, my wife is sick. Please don't frighten her." "Well," said the captain, "I must see about this. I'll have to search your house. Lead the way." The planter very reluctantly passed from one room to another, under Captain Newell's direction, opening drawers of bureaus and cupboards. At last, after being twice bidden—and the second time not very gently, but quite persuasively—the planter opened a closet door in one of the rooms, and there as large as life, and trembling till his teeth fairly chattered, was a Confederate soldier. "Ah ha!" said the captain. "Got you have I?"—And without further parley the Confederate came out and surrendered.

The same day Major Hubbard out on the other side of the river, some three miles back of Rodney, with his cavalry battalion, found a Confederate, carefully hidden away in the "dumb-waiter," with which the house was supplied. Information had been received from some quarter that a lot of small arms had been crossed over the river, just below Rodney, and the informant said they could not yet have been taken far into the interior. An expedition was at once planned

for their capture. About daybreak, on the 12th, the fleet dropped down to St. Joseph, and the whole command started in pursuit. There had been a recent heavy rain. The ground was muddy, and the air hot and misty. Six miles out from the river, the command was divided—one part taking a road leading across a bayou some ten miles dis-where the arms had been crossed. This latter part of the command soon ascertained that the party with the arms had two and a half days the start, and were doubtless already at safe distance in the enemy's country. A junction of the two Marine detachments was effected at the appointed place, and after a thirty mile ride, over the worst of roads, the weary and mud-bespattered command reached the boats again, bringing with them seven or eight prisoners, and many horses and mules, with which to more fully mount the infantry. Upon this expedition, the Brigade visited a section of the country where no Federal troops had ever been seen before, and the arrival of the Marines at each plantation, proved a great event to the darkies. They collected about the mounted men, danced, sang, and shouted, and seemed in perfect ecstasies, begging to shake hands. Evidently they thought "The Year of Jubilo" had, indeed, come. The fleet remained here all day, the 13th, and the time was spent in securing corn and forage for the horses. At 6 o'clock the following morning the boats crossed over to the Mississippi side, and the whole command disembarked and moved out together. Two miles out on the road, considerable difficulty was encountered in crossing a bayou, which was very miry, and over which there was no bridge. The command was obliged to dismount, and drive the horses across, while the men themselves went over on logs, which lay across the stream. Two of the officers, and several of the men, who attempted to make the crossing on their horses, got complete duckings. The hills were reached, about two miles above Rodney, and here the infantry and the cavalry parted company, the former passing through Rodney, and subsequently pushing out on the Fayette road, while the latter went by a circuitous route, via Oakland College, to a point on the Fayette road two miles south of Rodney, where both arrived about the same time, and returned together to the boats, which they reached about three o'clock p. m. The infantry, on their route, captured a 1st Lieutenant, with mail, and two other prisoners. The cavalry also captured a Confederate Lieutenant.

Both these officers had staid at the homes of their "lady loves" a little too long. Captain Crandall, Assistant Adjutant General who was present at the capture of the one taken by the cavalry says: "The poor girl said to me: 'You will take good care of him, won't you?'" "Most assuredly," I replied. "We'll take such good care of him that it will probably be a good while before you see him again"; and a Marine near by, added—"We'll give him plenty of hard tack." One of the captures of Confederate mail at this time, is thus interestingly described by Jesse B. Gordon of Co. A, Cavalry:

CAPTURING A CONFEDERATE MAIL.

When near Oakland College, Charley Willis and I fell out of ranks, and were soon joined by Lieut. Ed. Ellet, the General's son. We dismounted and rested near a small stream, while the command moved on. Pretty soon a carriage came down the road, from the direction in which the column was moving. It contained only one person—a young woman. As she came to the brook the horse she drove wanted to stop and drink, but she urged him on. Lieutenant Ellet spoke to her, and stepping up, unreined the horse, and while the animal was drinking, talked with the young lady, who in answer to his question, said she had been down to Natchez to trade. She finally admitted that she was a rebel, and the Lieutenant, badgering her, asked if she had ever and held it out toward her, as if for her to take it, and shoot. Finding she shot a Yankee. She made some spunky reply when Ed. pulled out his revolver was really going to take it, he put it up, saying she was too willing, and then told her he would have to search her carriage. The Lieutenant then sent Charley Willis to overtake and bring back the General, and ordered the lady to get out, which she very reluctantly did. The Lieutenant told me to guard her, while he examined the vehicle, which was an old-fashioned family baronche with a large, open space under the seat, and a movable lid under the cushion. Lieutenant Ellet soon got into this receptacle and pulled out an old coffee sack, tied with a string. Breaking the string, he emptied the contents out upon the ground. Several packages of papers, letters, etc.—a regular Confederate mail, which this young woman was carrying. Just then the command returned and the mail (without the female) was taken along to the boats.

It may be interesting to our readers to know what was found in these Confederate mails, so frequently captured by the Marines. Capt. W. D. Crandall, in one of his home letters of that period, tells us: "Tonight we were overhauling the mails captured. The tone of Confederate letters has of late become very much discouraged. The

writers are out of sorts. Bad money—high prices—great scarcity—loss of slaves—lost battles—and fault finding generally. Soldiers cannot get furloughs, and it is feared that when their present time of service is up, they will be forced in again. Many swear they won't serve without first being allowed to go home. They begin to doubt whether they are going to succeed, and many talk of giving it up. In these letters are found rings, locks of hair, paper curlies, scraps of home-made goods, sprigs, poetry, and many amusing sentimental writings, but I have, as yet found but one pair of boots in a letter."

As illustrating the references in the foregoing to "bad money," "high prices," "great scarcity," etc., the following incident, related by Adam Decker, of Co. K Inf., is given: "We were out on a skirmishing expedition one day, and after a long and wearisome ride, were very hungry. Upon approaching a small farm house, a party, composed of Sergeant Cross, myself and two other comrades, applied for something to eat. A two-course meal, consisting of corn bread and milk, was hastily prepared, and as hastily consumed. However meager the supply it served to satisfy our hunger, and being like all Marines too modest to accept this kind hospitality, even from a Confederate lady, for nothing, we compensated her for her trouble, with two hundred dollars. (Confederate money.) In explanation, I will state that the capturing of a confederate pay-master, together with a goodly sum of southern money, only a short time before, was what enabled us to show such generous liberality."

In the stress for fuel, the *BALTI*c and *DIANA* were ordered to Big Black Island for wood, and the rams were instructed to secure fuel wherever they could best get it.

The quartermaster boat, *FAIRCHILD*, now returning from New Orleans, issued rations, forage, etc., and then proceeded on up to Vicksburg, taking all the prisoners with her.

During the forenoon of the 16th orders were issued, leaving Major Hubbard in command, while General Ellet went with the *Atocrat* to Vicksburg. But a painful occurrence delayed the General's departure until evening. During the morning, teams had been kept busy hauling in wood. About noon some of the teamsters came in, post-haste, to the river, having been fired upon by skulking enemies, up in the hills. It was certainly known that the only force in

the neighborhood, was a Captain McGruder's company, from Port Gibson, and that Bayou Pierre was not fordable, except at Grindstone ford, some twelve miles above. Hence only two companies of cavalry were sent out, and were broken up into four squads, to scout the roads five or six miles out. About an hour after these troops went out, three men came dashing in, with the report that one of the four squads, consisting of Lieutenant Kirk and ten men, had been ambuscaded, the Lieutenant badly wounded, and two men seriously hurt. The command was called out, and when the place of the occurrence was reached, Lieutenant Kirk was found, lying on the ground, dangerously wounded, and surrounded by his men. Two Assistant Surgeons had come along, bringing the ambulance, into which Lieutenant Kirk was placed, and taken to the boats. One of the two injured men was found to be severely wounded in the shoulder, and the other one slightly, in the arm. It was ascertained that the Confederate force was only a small squad, which had but just been chased off another road, by one of the other Marine parties. It had cut across, through the timber, had come out on this particular road, just in time to catch Lieutenant Kirk and his men, who were recklessly galloping forward without any advance guard. The ambush delivered its murderous fire, and without waiting to see its effect, fled away, not even securing the wounded Lieutenant's horse, or arms.

Upon examination it was found, that in the case of Lieutenant Kirk, the ball had passed just inside the thigh and through the lower part of the abdomen, ranging upward, and lodging in the spinal column. The ball was extracted through a rear incision, but the bones of the spine were badly crushed, and his life was despaired of from the first. He, however, survived for nine days. The surgeons declared that such a wound would have proved fatal to most men, within twenty-four hours. Lieut. James B. Kirk was an excellent officer. In the presence of danger he knew no fear; always led his men, and was greatly esteemed by his own men, and by the other officers of the Brigade. But, as in the case of Captain Wright of the same company, his life was needlessly sacrificed.

At 7 p. m., the *Atrocist* sailed for Vicksburg, and the *Raise* returned from wooding, above. On the 17th the cavalry went out in

the rear of Grand Gulf, and had a slight skirmish. It was the intention to make an expedition in the direction of Grand Gulf, but on account of rain it was postponed. A Confederate Lieutenant, who had deserted, came in during the night, and gave himself up. On the 18th, companies C and D Cav., were sent out for the arrest of a Confederate conscript, known to be in a certain house. They had gone but a mile or so when they came upon the enemy in some force, and sent back for help, and the entire mounted force went to their assistance. Comrade Augustus Ralston, of Company C Cav., gives an interesting account of the running fight which ensued, and which was waged principally by the advance:

A RUNNING FIGHT AND A NARROW ESCAPE

Our company (C Cav.) was in the lead, and we had not gone over two or three miles, until we came in sight of a company of Confederates, and went after them. They retired slowly, and finally ambushed our advance composed of twelve or fifteen men, wounding and capturing several of them. I remember Frank Long had nine buckshot put into him. Henry Parker, Elijah Logsdon, James Dow, Jacob Hank, and one other were captured, but Hank and Dow subsequently made their escape. Hank jumped over a fence and ran, while we were crowding the "Johnnies" so hard they had no time to pursue him. After these men had been captured, Hank and myself, with others, took the extreme advance, and we had a running fight for two or three miles. The Confederates would dismount and make a stand, and then we would also dismount, rout them, and get them on the run again. We had thus driven them two or three miles, when they made a stand, in a cut in the road. We dismounted, but just then the order was given us to retire. The Confederates heard the command, and at once started for us. I tried several times to remount my horse, but my boots were slick with yellow clay mud, and my foot would slip out of the stirrup, so that when the enemy were only a short distance from me, I was compelled to abandon my horse, and cut out afoot. The "Johnnies" commanded me to surrender, calling me a rather uncomplimentary name, but I didn't stop to quarrel with them, or try to make them take it back, but ran as fast as my legs would carry me. Pretty soon I went over a hill, across a ravine, and into a canebrake, where I found a sink hole, into which I dropped. I can't say how long I remained there, but I think fully two hours. I was almost afraid to move, but thought I had better load my revolver, which was empty. I felt for it, and it was gone. The holster was ripped from top to bottom. I had thrown away my carbine, that I might run the faster, and there I was—no horse, no carbine, no revolver, no hat, and five or six miles from the boats! I realized that I could not stay there, and must make a break for the river. I was afraid to go out on the road; my only

safety was to keep under cover of the woods, and canebrakes, and cautiously make my way. Leaving my hiding place, I traveled up and down hills and across ravines, guessing the direction. About dark I reached the fleet, and the boys, seeing me, cheered me lustily. They all thought I was captured when Hank was, since we were last seen together, dismounted. My horse returned to the company, and one of the boys, whose horse was shot, rode him to the boats.

From another account of this affair, we learn how James Dow made his escape from the clutches of the enemy. It seems that when he was taken prisoner, his captors promptly stripped him of most of his clothing, and relieved him of his carbine. But fortunately they left him his boots, in one leg of which was his revolver. He was taken to one side, and kept under guard of one man, until suddenly seeing his own company making a dash for the enemy, Dow quickly pulled his revolver out of his boot leg, and at the point of it drove his guard into the midst of the advancing Marines. His comrades declared it was "just like an Ellet scout to play such an underhand trick" on a poor, confiding Confederate. The Marine loss in this fight was, one man badly wounded, and three captured—one of whom (not previously named) was Bernard Segall of Company D Infantry. He had slipped away from duty on board, to have a good time with the cavalry boys, and in the melee was wounded and taken prisoner. Years after Segall reported that he was "absent nine months, and lived on sponge cake and ice cream, at the Calawba, Andersonville and Libby hotels." In this affray a number of horses were killed and some of the Confederates, how many, was not ascertained, were wounded, and one of them was taken prisoner. Captain McGruder commanded the Confederates, the same officer who attacked Lieutenant Kirk's squad, on the 16th. He was a brave fellow, and showed himself capable of putting up a good fight, and was ready whenever he had a chance, to measure arms with the Marines.

During the forenoon of the 19th the Autocrat returned from Vicksburg. The troops remained that day on board the boats. During the day, a story was circulated in the fleet that there had been a scheme for the capture of General Ellet. It was said that a certain Mrs. Whitney, living out some three miles, and who claimed to be a Unionist and had "protection papers" from higher authority, planned

to make a big dinner, and invite the General and his son Lieut. Ed. C. Ellet out to it, and while there, the Confederates were to swoop down upon the place, and make them prisoners. It was further told that on the appointed day, and at the very hour when the proposed capture was to have been effected, the Confederates did come dashing in with a mounted force, and surrounded the house. If such a plan was laid, and the execution of it was attempted, it only shows that the woman knew little of the man she was treacherously scheming to betray. However, a day or two after this, Capt. J. R. Crandall, of Co. A Cav., was out past Mrs. Whitney's house, and stopped in. In the course of conversation with his hostess, the captain told her that he had heard it said among the officers, that she had tried to trap the General, but that he never believed it. Not he! For he had too good an opinion of her, etc. She stoutly protested her innocence, and declared her intention still to make a real nice cake for the General, and bring it in, together with a bottle of splendid wine, she had. "That,"—said Captain Crandall, (the greatest wag in the command) "will be a great treat to the General, for he is very fond of good wine. "Come, and bring him the wine, by all means." Sure enough, a day or two later, here came the Mrs. Whitney, with the cake and the wine. The General was very much taken aback, for as was well known among all his men, he was a "total abstainer"—almost a fanatical temperance man—and intolerant as to the presence of wine or liquor of any kind in the fleet. But his gallantry was equal to the occasion, for he saw that he was the subject of a practical joke, and sent the "nice present" to the cook house, in a hurry, and changed the subject. The joke was hugely enjoyed among both officers and men, and was laughed over for many a day. There was always a lingering suspicion, never entirely eradicated, that the "wag in the case" was the author of both the story, and the joke.

On January 20th the cavalry, and three companies of infantry, with the mountain howitzer, were sent out for a scout. They made a ride of thirty-three miles, and came back about sunset, bringing in two prisoners. It was now rumored that General Wirt Adams' whole force was in the vicinity of Port Gibson. A final operation, to prolong, and possibly save Lieutenant Kirk's life, was this day considered

by the surgeons, but owing to a sudden sinking spell, it was deferred and was not performed, his death being anticipated hourly.

The *RAINE*, *BALTIC* and *DIANA* were ordered to drop down to where the *SWITZERLAND* was wooding, and begin early in the morning to take on fuel. The *FAUCUNDO* joined the fleet late in the day, with mail and dispatches. On the 21st the whole fleet went down and landed together, half way between Grand Gulf and Bruinsburg, on the Louisiana side, and from this time on to the 25th, was engaged in getting wood. In a report (from the records) dated at Hamburg, January 23, General Wirt Adams tells of coming up, with his force, from the vicinity of Port Hudson, to near Natchez, where he says, he that day secretly posted "two strong detachments to catch foraging and marauding parties of the enemy's cavalry"—and was then going to Rodney, "in the vicinity of which Ellet's Marine Brigade are doing much damage." Then, telling of the expected raid on the Central Railroad, from Vicksburg, he says: "I shall threaten Natchez tomorrow, to delay Gresham's brigade, which is to join this expedition." On the 25th, the *RAINE* was sent up to Hard Times Landing, for wood, and two companies of infantry, under command of Captain Hughes, went out after beef cattle, securing about twenty-five head.

The boats again dropped down stream about four miles, to a point on the Louisiana side. Toward evening Lieutenant Kirk, who had clung so tenaciously to life so long, died from the effects of his wound. On the 26th a scout of two companies of cavalry and some infantry, was sent out—the former to Watson's place, to intercept a party of negroes, said to be hand-cuffed and chained together, enroute to Texas. The party sought was not found, but about thirty head of good beef cattle were secured, and brought in. On this day the grave was dug, and preparations made for the burial of Lieutenant Kirk. The *BALTIC* was ordered up to Hard Times Landing, in search of Confederate cotton.

On the 27th Lieutenant Kirk's remains were buried, with the usual honors of war.

That night a yawl expedition was sent down the river some miles, to a point where a Confederate "skiff-ferry" was operated. Of this

incident, Captain Newell, who had charge of the party, gave the following account:

THE YAWL EXPEDITION.

My orders were to move quietly, in the darkness, using my own discretion at the ferry the *Switzerland* to drop down for us in the morning. Taking Lieutenant Guildemeister, and as many men as the yawl would carry, we stole away down stream and finally landed some miles below, near the scene of operations. Several roads converged at the ferry, and in silence my men were placed in a pre-arranged semi-circle inclosing the point of intersection of these roads. At the approach of any intruder, his challenge was the signal for the closing in of the whole cordon. The plan worked. In less than ten minutes the signal closed the line in on two rebel officers, splendidly mounted. They were artillery captains, who expected to cross in a skiff—swimming their horses. They were neatly trapped—but appeared most of all to regret the loss of their fine steeds, which at once entered the service of Uncle Sam. On her way back to the fleet next morning the *Switzerland* was hailed by a couple of young ladies on the river bank, who wanted to exchange some butter and eggs for coffee. A yawl was quickly lowered and two or three officers, Lieut. Ed. Ellet among them, were soon ashore, having a good time bantering the girls, while the trading was in progress. Then some one suggested that their horses, tied near, be brought up and the ladies mounted before leaving them. In a race for the animals the Lieutenant was a winner, and came pulling one up alongside a stump, when there was a loud guffaw, in which the young ladies joined heartily—one of them remarking: "If I should ever marry a Yankee officer, I want one who knows enough to lead my horse up on the right side." The Lieutenant had already discovered his mistake, and was red in the face with confusion. "Oh h—," came in an undertone from his direction, as he dropped the reins and made for the boat. The Lieutenant didn't hear the last of this for many a day after.

A remarkable incident of the return trip of the *SWITZERLAND*, with the yawl party and their capture, is worthy of mention. It was the season of ducks and geese on the river, and a bar ahead was seen to be literally black with wild geese. Colonel Ellet directed two pieces loaded with canister, and at the opportune moment fired one at the bar, and the other into the cloud of fowl as it arose, and such a slaughter of game was never, before or since, seen on the river. Roast goose was on the Brigade menu for many days. On the 28th the flags on all the boats floated at half mast, in honor of Chief Sailing Master Henecks, news of whose death had been received at Headquarters. Another yawl expedition was sent below at night, and captured a

Lieutenant, one enlisted man, and three horses. The smallpox appearing among the men on the DIANA, she was sent below, near to St. Joseph, to establish a pest hospital. The SWITZERLAND was sent to anchor off Waterproof Landing, and the FAIRCHILD to Natchez, with a cargo of Confederate cotton. A live alligator, about four feet long, was here caught by some of the men. On the 29th some of the command discovered a small navy boat, supposed to have belonged to Farragut's fleet, on Lake St. Joseph. On the 30th, Co. B Cavalry captured two Lieutenants, and on the 31st came orders for the fleet to report at Vicksburg for service above. Leaving the SWITZERLAND to cruise between Hard Times and Waterproof, the other boats moved up stream, and spent all day February 1, in wooding, and in the evening started on for Vicksburg, reaching there at 8 o'clock a. m. of the 2nd, and finding the FURROX at the wharf with several barges of coal for the fleet, of which it had for some time been greatly in need.



CHAPTER VI

February-April, 1864

Scouting Above Milliken's Bend.—Marines Fool a Planter.—The Sergeant and the Milk.—Scout Across Steele's Bayou.—Night Raid on Daniel's Lookout.—Second Dash Into Port Gibson.—Cavalry Captures a Camp.—Caught in Ambush.—Prayers Ending With Pistol Practice.—Ambuscade of a Marine Cotton Train.—With the Red River Expedition.—Loss of the Woodford.—Polk's Plans for More Guerrilla Work.—Marine Light Battery Disorganized.—Scouting Again Above Vicksburg.—Lieutenant Murphy's Exploit.—Adams and Diana in Collision.—Conroy on the Yazoo.—Rebels Capture an Ironclad and Scare Away the Liverpool Negro Garrison.—Autocrat and Fairchild Exchange Cargoes.—After Illicit Traders.

The 2d and 3d of February, 1864, were spent at the Vicksburg wharf, coaling and getting ready for a campaign above. Instructions, somewhat enlarging the scope and plan of the Brigade's work were now received from General McPherson, reading as follows:

HEADQUARTERS 17TH ARMY CORPS.

Vicksburg, Miss., February 3, 1864.

Brigadier General Ellet, Commanding Fleet:—

General:—You will immediately come up with your command and cruise between Milliken's Bend and a short distance above Greenville, to keep the river clear of guerrillas, and extend what protection you can to plantations along the bank.—It has, for certain purposes, been found necessary to break up and remove the posts at Milliken's Bend and Goodrich's Landing, and Skipwith's, and the plantation lessees feel that they are left without any protection. You will reassure them as much as possible, and not let them become stampeded unnecessarily.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

JAS. B. McPHERSON,

Major General.

This was in pursuance of the Government policy, and the orders came through General Grant, and covered the whole cotton-growing lands along the Mississippi but the scheme of army protection was soon found to be a burdensome diversion from the operations of the field. We find, a few weeks later, General Sherman writing about it to McPherson in this strain: "I think General Grant is making a mistake in taking all the negro troops and Marine Brigade to cover plantations, or, in other words, that the plan of distributing these troops along the west bank of the river will be less affective than the plan I had initiated of defending the Yazoo and Washita Rivers, which would cover the plantations from the rear. But this will manifest itself in time."

The following, from General Halleck, indicates the general policy of the government, and its wishes as to the Brigade:

Washington, February 16, 1864, 3:30 p. m.

Major General Grant:—

It is deemed important by the government that leased plantations on the Mississippi River receive due protection, and the Secretary of War desires that General Elliot's Marine Brigade be assigned to that service. It is understood that it has been so assigned temporarily, by General Sherman.

H. W. HALLECK,

General-in-Chief.

On the 3d Captain Lehigh Dakan of Co. K, Inf., tendered his resignation but no favorable returns upon it was received from Washington until May 3rd.. At four o'clock a. m., of the 4th, the fleet started up stream, leaving the FAUCENLD with instructions to join the command wherever it might be, by the 9th. A short landing was made at Milliken's Bend, where the RAIXE was left, other boats being also left at different points. At Milliken's Bend the General, with a small squad, went ashore, and after a short scout they were taken on board further up the river. The post at this point had, some time previous, been abandoned, and the troops removed to Vicksburg.

Great alarm was in consequence felt by loyal planters, and the special mission of the Brigade in this region at this time was to give them the protection needed.

Paymaster Hanna, whose visits were always welcome, not alone because he brought the men their pay, but also because he was uni-

versally respected and beloved in the command, now made his appearance in the Brigade.

Before retiring for the night, orders were issued for the command to be in readiness for a scout the next morning. On the morning of the 5th two companies of cavalry disembarked, and proceeded by land as far up as Lake Providence. No enemy was found, though they had of late been specially active in raiding and burning plantations, which the government was trying to protect. During this scout the command approached the plantation of an old southerner by the name of Griffin. The advance dashed suddenly up to his house. The proprietor came out, and inquired, "Are you Federals or Confederates?" Some one replied: "We are Quantrell's men." "Are you," said the planter, "Well, now boys I'm glad to see you. Let me tell you, you go up above here, and there's a plantation stocked with 'niggers' and 'a yankee schoolmaster; you clean it out.'" Just then the main column arrived, and to the old man's great discomfiture he learned that he had completely given himself away to Federals. It is needless to add that he was given a pressing invitation to accompany the command, and that he accepted the invitation. Quantrell's men were in the vicinity, further back, and in their raids, some of them at least, wore Federal uniforms, and this it was which trapped the old planter.

But a short time previous to this, Major Tallerday of the infantry was out in charge of an expedition for the double errand of meeting Quantrell, and also finding some C. S. A. cotton, said to be concealed near by. The Major made inquiry respecting the cotton, of an old planter upon whose premises it was supposed to be hidden, but the old fellow positively denied that there was any such cotton on his plantation. Then the Major "went a fishing." He suggested that Federal uniforms did not always clothe Yankees. He asked the planter if he did not know that Quantrell's men were about, and whether he would recognize them if he saw them in blue. The old man hesitatingly replied "N-o-o-o. I have seen none of Quantrell's men, unless you are Quantrell!" Then the Major saw that he had "hooked his fish," and it was only necessary to "play" him skillfully to "land" him. So the Major took his man aside and said: "I am all right, and am here under proper orders to look after this cotton. I don't ask you to commit yourself, since you are so near the Federal lines, but just

"give me the necessary pointers." The planter then revealed the whereabouts of the hidden cotton, and said he had just had it all marked over, to keep the Yankees from seizing it if they came. It was never written of Major Tallerday, "Behold a Marine in whom there is no guile!" The planter was dumb-founded when he learned how he had been sold out, and the United States Government was subsequently made richer by a fine haul of cotton.

While the Flagship *Atrocax* passed up to Skipwith's Landing, the four companies of mounted infantry left at Goodrich's Landing under command of Colonel Currie, went out some distance on the road toward Floyd, Arkansas. No indications of the enemy's presence being seen, they returned to camp at the river and spent the rest of the day in drill. On the morning of the 6th, two companies of cavalry went off the *Atrocax* at Skipwith's Landing, and out across Steele's Bayou in Mississippi. On their return they destroyed the flat used as a ferry by them in going and coming. Just before dark the *Diana* and *Baltic* came up from below. On the 7th some cotton was brought in by a party from off the *Baltic*. In the evening the *Atrocax* left for Vicksburg. On the 8th Major Tallerday with a detachment was out, taking two prisoners, but with no further incident of importance. During all this time, when not in the field, the command was daily drilling—a fine piece of ground for this purpose having been found near the river. On the morning of the 9th, the boats at Skipwith's Landing moved up to Point Worthington, and from there Colonel Currie with six companies of infantry and a howitzer, made an expedition into the interior, without encountering the enemy and returning in the evening to the boats. On the 10th at five o'clock a. m., the fleet moved up to Sunnyside. From this point, the infantry, under command of Major Tallerday, went ashore, and took a circuitous route, and when near Lake Village, came upon a detachment of Quantrell's men. Major Tallerday tried every device he could think of to draw them into a fight, but they declined an encounter with the Marines, skulking in the canebrakes, from which they were driven by a few rounds from the howitzer, and finally disappeared altogether. The Marines returned to their boats with three prisoners.

On the 11th the infantry under command of Major Tallerday again moved out in the direction of Lake Village, and when within

three miles of the place, were met by a flag of truce. The bearers of this flag claimed to represent a body of armed citizens, and brought a request from their commander, for Major Tallerdav to join forces with them in hunting down Quantrell, whom they denounced as an outlaw who was committing depredations without distinction between friends and foes, or discriminating as to age or sex. But Major Tallerdav was too alert, and declined the offer, saying he did not care to campaign in company with rebels. The Major further said, however, that if this force proved to be as represented, he would not molest them, and they on the other hand declared that they wished no encounter with the Marines. No collision occurred during the day between the two forces, and the Marines with all their efforts were unable to gather any further information respecting the character of those sending in the flag of truce, and returned to their boats, bringing in three prisoners with them. The *FAUCUN* now came up from below and issued rations.

On the 12th a part of the infantry was again ashore under Major Tallerdav, without any occurrence worthy of note, and in the evening the boats moved up stream to Griffith's Landing. On the 13th the command was out again. Three prisoners and some cattle were brought on board. At nine o'clock p. m. the fleet started down stream, touching only at Skipwith's, and reaching Vicksburg at three o'clock on the afternoon on the 14th. Considerable sickness prevailed among the men about this time. Many deserters from the southern army were coming into Vicksburg and giving themselves up, under the terms of President Lincoln's Amnesty Proclamation.

It will be remembered that on the afternoon of February 7th, the *AUTOCRAT*, leaving the rest of the fleet at Skipwith's Landing, went down the river alone. During the interval of her separation from the main command, she had proceeded downward, finding the *RAIXE*, February 8th, just above Milliken's Bend. Here Major J. M. Hubbard's resignation, tendered December 8th, '63, was returned with favorable endorsement, and he bade farewell to the Marine service, and started for home. Major Hubbard's resignation was a serious loss to the command. He was a strict disciplinarian, a good tactician, and a fearless fighter. Previous to his connection with the Marine Brigade he was a major in the First Mo. Cavalry, and in a report made by

Confederate Colonel J. O. Shelby to General Marmaduke, of the Prairie Grove fight, under date December 11, 1862, we find the following:

Captain Jarrett of the Second Mo. (Confederate) bore himself bravely, capturing with his own hands Maj. J. M. Hubbard, of the old Mo. First (Federal (Cavalry)), a man well known in that state as a daring and dashing officer.

Capt. J. R. Crandall of Co. A Cavalry succeeded Major Hubbard in the command of the cavalry battalion.

While the *RAIXE* was here some days before, occurred an incident, remembered and told by Orderly Sergt. Wm. Watkins, of B Cav., characteristic of the Marines when ashore: "We were returning from a scout, and came to a large plantation, and the boys proposed that we see if we couldn't find some milk. I took a few men from the advance guard, with all the canteens, and sending the guard on, the squad rode around with me to the rear of the mansion which seemed to be all closed up, and dismounted at the spring house. We found the door locked, but it was soon opened, and I told the boys to stay outside, and I would pass the milk to them, for I saw there was plenty. I had just reached the door with a large pan of milk, when some one struck the pan and the milk was spilled all over me. Two mighty mad rebel women had broke in through the boys and were raising Ned, when Major Hubbard rode up, and the boys vanished in no time. I was nicely caught, but the Major with a twinkle in his eye, ordered the squad to fall in, though no one was then in sight but me. I followed in wet and mad to think how I had lost all that milk, through those cantankerous rebel women."

Leaving Milliken's Bend together, at four o'clock p. m., the same day, the *ATROCITY* and *RAIXE* proceeded down the river, reaching Vicksburg at six o'clock in the evening. Early on the morning of the 9th, these two vessels swung out from the Vicksburg wharf, and headed down stream. They stopped at Warrenton for wood, and at six p. m. tied up for the night, six miles below Grand Gulf. J. M. Fulkerson, Orderly Sergt. Co. B Inf., gives this account of an incident which occurred in the evening of this day: "Lieutenant Benson selected thirty men from our company, and, accompanied by Lieut. Ed. Ellet, went out on a scout. We left the *ATROCITY* a little after dark

"in three yawls, and proceeded down the river, intending to land at Bruinsburg, but we got lost, and landed below the town. Leaving a few men to guard the yawls, we marched up the river to the town, and there took the road leading out to the bluffs, some three miles distant. Reaching the top of the bluffs, we made our way out to the 'Signal House,' a known headquarters for Confederates. This was a large plantation mansion, belonging to Widow Daniels, built on a commanding eminence, some five miles from the river. From the cupola of this building Confederate soldiers watched our boats for miles up and down the river, and General Ellet determined to break up this game. Reaching the mansion we surrounded it, while Lieutenants Benson and Ellet, accompanied by myself, knocked at the front entrance. A servant opened the door and we pushed our way into the parlor, where we found two Confederate officers, and four or five ladies singing, and having a good time. Lieutenant Ellet laid his hand upon the shoulder of one of these officers and asked him if he was a Confederate, and he answered in the affirmative. 'Well, then,' said Ellet: 'you are our prisoners.' The women fussed, cried, and called us all kinds of names, but after a short tarry we took our prisoners and returned to the yawls, reaching the Autocrat at two o'clock next morning.

Sunrise of the 10th found the two boats at Bruinsburg. Here a detachment was sent ashore for a scout through Oakland to Rodney, to which latter place the boats had in the meantime gone. Four prisoners, a confederate mail and ambulance were captured on this raid. On the 11th a detachment was again started from Rodney in the direction of Port Gibson. A precipitate charge was made into this town. Two Confederate soldiers were killed, two wounded, and five captured, and the command returned to the boats at nine o'clock p. m.

The 12th was spent in securing fodder for the horses. On the 13th at ten o'clock p. m., Major J. R. Crandall in command of one hundred cavalry went ashore. Between the river and Port Gibson, which was reached about sunrise, two houses were searched and three prisoners taken. In a written account of this scout Major Crandall says: 'I received orders to move upon the force of the rebel Captain Lewis, who was camped with his company of scouts, some thirty-five miles

east of Rodney, where our fleet then was. I left Saturday night, February 14th, at ten o'clock with one hundred men of our battalion, intending to make an attack at daylight the following morning. Soon after we left the boats it began to rain hard, continuing through most of the night, which was very dark. However, we reached our destination at the appointed time, only to find that the bird had flown. From an old negro, I learned that the Confederates broke camp the day before, moved five miles out, and were quartered in negro huts, from which it would be impossible for me to dislodge them, unless I could take them by surprise. I also learned that to reach them would take me forty miles from Rodney, and within six miles of where Major Roberts was encamped with three hundred Confederates. I was in a quandry for a time but soon decided, and taking the old negro with me, moved toward their camp. I further learned from the negro that Captain Lewis and his men were nearly half a mile from the main road, and when we reached the plantation road leading to their camp, fortunately for us, we found that the picket who had been placed there had relieved himself and gone to breakfast (as Captain Lewis afterward informed me) so that we were able to give the enemy a perfect surprise. When we came in sight of the camp, they were at breakfast, and our whole command immediately charged upon them with drawn revolvers. This was about eight o'clock Sunday morning. We captured Captain Lewis, one Lieutenant, one Surgeon, and twenty-eight enlisted men, killed three of their men, and recaptured four men belonging to the 32d Iowa. We lost no men and only one horse. We also captured about thirty horses, and forty stands of arms. Being in such close proximity to Major Roberts, I moved at once for the fleet, leaving a small squad behind to burn the plantation house—a large, elegant residence—together with some \$25,000 worth of quartermaster and commissary stores. We reached the fleet Sunday night at nine o'clock p. m., with four prisoners, having travelled eighty miles in twenty-three hours."

About this time the balance of the fleet, which our narrative left in the vicinity of Griffith's Landing, came down the river, and from this time on to March 10th, the entire force operated below Vicksburg, being employed principally, in locating and bringing in cotton, large quantities of which were secured. Falling within this period are a

few incidents accounted worthy a place in this History, and which, without following the daily routine of cotton gathering, we record.

February 22nd, was duly celebrated in Vicksburg as Washington's birthday. The day opened with a national salute from the guns of the garrison. Then followed a grand parade of all the troops in the city, finally passing in review before the Commander of the Post. The troops then massed and listened to the reading of Washington's Farewell Address, and to speeches made by General Braymore of Illinois and others.

While these ceremonies were in progress, the Marines on the *BAL-tic* were at Luna Landing "celebrating" in quite a different way. About sunrise of that day, Capt. J. P. Harper of Co. H, Inf., with seventeen men of his own company, went out in pursuit of what was thought to be a small squad of the enemy, which had fired on the boat. Harper's men had crossed a large plantation, and were intending to pass through an open gate just ahead, when suddenly the advance consisting of four men, under Sergt. Alonzo Allis received a terrible volley, from about one hundred Texans, concealed behind the fence on either side the gate. All five of the advance were wounded, Sergeant Allis mortally, and he died some three or four days after, and was buried on the river bank near Greenville, Mississippi. By the same volley, and while in the act of firing, Sergt. Philip Stevens' horse was killed under him, and he himself received a ball in the knee. He maintained an upright position, however, and the enemy kept popping away at him. One ball grazed his head, and then he dropped over and feigned death. Coming upon him the "Johnnies" stripped him, taking his boots, revolver and equipments, clothing, and forty dollars in greenbacks, and then fired a parting shot which hit him in the right arm. Just then Co. G, dashed up and the enemy fled.

General Sherman had arrived from Huntsville, and of date February 27, though from his army headquarters, was issued the following, orders assigning the Brigade to a new duty.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT AND ARMY OF THE TENNESSEE.

Huntsville, Ala., February 27, 1864.

Special Orders No. 44.

I. Brigadier General Ellet, commanding Mississippi Marine Brigade, will

devote his attention and that of his command, exclusively to the protection of the planting interest on the Mississippi River.

He is in no case to go below Vicksburg or above Greenville without direct orders from the Department Commander, or other officers entitled to issue orders to him.

He is specially required to move from place to place within the limits herein prescribed as his services may be required to give protection.

By order of Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman.

R. M. SAWYER,

Assistant Adjutant General.

On the 28th of February, the *DIXIE* received Gen. W. T. Sherman and staff on board, and started for New Orleans. Her trip occupied a week and she returned and landed her distinguished passengers at Vicksburg wharf, at nine a. m., March 6th.

March 3rd, Corporal Richard Ferdon of Co. A, Inf., in charge of a guard of three men was sent, under orders from General Ellet, at request of Mrs. Daniels, to guard her house, she professing to fear assault from negroes. Family prayers were held in the parlor, and the men of the guard were invited to be present. At the close of the service, as the Marines opened the door to pass out of the parlor, Corporal Ferdon received a pistol shot in the right breast, the ball passing through the lung. Word was brought in to the boats, and Captain Newell, Ferdon's captain, was awakened, and accompanied by Co. B infantry under command of Lieutenant Benson, hastened to the scene. Mrs. Daniels and all her household disclaimed all knowledge as to the perpetrator of the dastardly deed, and all the inmates were in wildest fear that the house would be immediately burned to the ground. Indeed so enraged were the Marines that it was only through the most peremptory commands, supplemented by greatest vigilance, that Captain Newell and Lieutenant Benson kept the torch from being applied to the famous "Signal house," as the marines called it. Ferdon was at once removed to the boats, and in due time recovered from his wound.

March 4th witnessed one of the most disastrous reverses experienced in the history of the Brigade. Major J. R. Crandall of the Marine cavalry was in command of the force that day, and the following is his own account:

THE AMBUSCADE OF A MARINE COTTON TRAIN.

On March 14th, 1864, I received an order to report to Headquarters, and found General Ellet and a private citizen, who lived back from Coleman's Cross Roads, in private conversation. The citizen was telling the General of a lot of cotton, on a plantation about twenty-one miles back of Rodney, all belonging to the Confederacy and marked C. S. A. He promised, if the General would send a wagon train out for the cotton, he, for a stipulated reward, would act as guide in bringing it in. The General accepted the proposition, and ordered me to take the wagon train, and move early the next morning. We had about twenty-five wagons drawn by cattle and mules, which we had gathered from the surrounding plantations for hauling in grain and other feed for the horses of the command. I moved as ordered with companies C and D Cavalry, and K Infantry as guards. About eight miles out I met the guide as pre-arranged, and early in the afternoon reached the cotton, which we found as he had stated, all branded C. S. A. We loaded it promptly, and started on our return trip, reaching Red Lick church late in the afternoon, where I intended going into camp. I at once sent three teams out into the country for feed for our cattle and horses. Just before reaching the church we captured two fine horses, from a plantation where lived a middle aged man, with his wife and aged mother. We had been in camp a very short time when this gentleman came, requesting to see the officer in command. With some hesitancy he stated that although he had no regard for me or my command, he would give me some information, which was, that Major Roberts (from under whose very nose, on the 14th of the preceding month we had captured a company of men) was moving upon us with his entire command, which would result in a fight; and since his residence was only a few rods from the camp, a battle would be a severe shock to his wife and mother, and probably his home would be burned; he hoped, therefore, I would see it for my interest to move at once. He seemed like an intelligent man, and I was satisfied he was honest in his statement. I therefore called the officers together in the Red Lick church. It wasn't for the purpose of holding a prayer meeting, but to decide whether we should unload that cotton for a barricade, and fight it out there, or move immediately in hope of reaching Coleman's Cross Roads, before the enemy got there. Should we remain, there would be no protection of our animals and we would undoubtedly lose many of them in the fight, which would leave an additional number of men dismounted, putting us in a bad plight to move our train or to battle successfully with a force that so greatly outnumbered us. It was unanimously decided to break camp, which we did, without any feed for the stock, since early morning. Until we reached Coleman's Cross Roads, we were as liable to attack from the rear as from the front, and so I placed Co. D Cavalry in front, with a sergeant and twelve picked men for advance guard, and Co. C Cavalry in the rear, under command of Capt. Oscar F. Brown, and scattered Co. K Infantry, under command of Lieut. Michael Brannon, along with the wagons. It was nearly dark

when we moved out, with a light rain falling, and it soon grew very dark. Three miles from Coleman's, after having traveled two miles over a broken country, where in places excavations had been made in the construction of a narrow road, leaving embankments, fifteen or twenty feet high on either side, we ran into as well planned and executed an ambush, as I think was made during the war. The enemy allowed the advance guard, which was about a quarter of a mile ahead, to pass on to a place where they had formed a second ambuscade—building a fence across the road at that point—and when Co. D Cavalry at the head of the train reached the first ambuscade, they opened fire upon it from both sides, and twenty feet above. I ordered the company to draw revolvers and commence firing. Then I sent a courier ahead, to halt the advance and have them charge back, and another courier to hurry up the infantry. As the first courier passed up the short hill, he ran into another cut on the opposite side, where he received a full volley. Co. D Cavalry was then holding their position firmly, and galloped up to the top of the hill to get the position of the enemy on the opposite side. Before the infantry came up, and just as I left, the enemy began throwing rails down upon my men, compelling them to fall back. The enemy then slid down the embankment and took possession of the head of the train, and as I returned I found the cut filled with them and with dead horses. From the flash of the guns, I saw it was impossible for me to go through, so I turned and went again to the top of the hill, and there jumped my horse over the fence (there being none of the enemy there) hoping to flank the first ambuscade and return to my command. I was then in an old cotton field, and when I came to level ground I came upon a wide ditch. My horse being slightly wounded in the hip, failed to strike the other side with his hind feet, and landed upon his back some ten feet or more down. As he fell over I sprang from the saddle, and saved myself from being caught under him. I found him so tightly wedged in, I could not get him out. In the meantime the infantry had come up, charged up the first hill, and all firing then ceased. I could not tell then whether our men or the enemy had the front of the train, and having lost my revolvers under my horse, was as likely making my way back on foot, to run into the enemy as to reach my own troops. I therefore decided to make for the fleet on foot which I did, arriving at Rodney at 2 o'clock a. m.

But the Marine Infantry were holding their position, and Co. C Cavalry coming to their assistance, they together held their own for about an hour. Captain Brown, believing it extremely hazardous to advance into the ambuscade with his crippled force, and having a guide with him who knew all the roads, took a plantation road to the left, arriving at Rodney about the time I came in. The advance guard were all captured save one man, Corporal Frank J. Melton, whose horse jumped the fence. First Sergt. James W. Ellis was in command of Co. D Cavalry, and his horse was killed by the first volley, and the Sergeant went down in the darkness with his charger. Some of the men who were captured managed to escape during the night, and came in the

next day. Our casualties were, one man mortally, and six seriously wounded, and twelve taken prisoners. We also lost seventeen horses. The next morning, taking all the cavalry and part of the infantry, we moved out again. On reaching the train, we found most of the cotton burned, and after driving back a small guard left by the enemy, we loaded the balance of the cotton, and with the killed and part of the wounded, left on the field by the enemy, returned to the fleet.

Sergeant Jno. F. Barmore of Co. D Cav., who was wounded, and saw all that took place, while a prisoner, adds many interesting details: "We had not ridden more than one mile and were just passing through a deep cut in the road, just one mile south from Coleman's cross roads when we were greeted by a volley of musketry from the tops of the banks from both sides of the road. This was our first knowledge of the enemy, who had kindly let the videttes pass through the deep cut so as to be sure of the reserve, and indeed they made sure, for they emptied seven saddles the first volley and I think only two horses escaped alive, being those of Stephen W. Turner, company blacksmith, and Corporal Frank J. Melton. The killed of the advance guard were Corporal Dix and Louis R. McDonald. The wounded were Serg't George F. Cox, Private William J. Roney, William H. H. Spitler, Corporal Henry Fry and myself. John Welker was knocked from his horse by a blow from a rail thrown down on him. Sergt. J. W. Ellis was also wounded in this engagement. He was acting first lieutenant in command of our old company, D cavalry. Theodore M. Badgley, of our company, was knocked from his horse with a fence rail and badly hurt. When we were first fired upon the column came forward and found and engaged the enemy for a few moments, then fell back and did not renew the attack. Afterwards the company of infantry (Company K) which accompanied us on this expedition under the command of Lieut. M. Brennan, did good work deploying and engaging the enemy. The command now withdrew, leaving the enemy in possession of the field, and also the teams and wagons loaded with our one hundred thousand dollar's worth of cotton, whilst it was a sort of go-as-you-please to get to the boats at Rodney. Corporal Frank J. Melton jumped the barricade built across the road in the ambush and rode through to the boats. Stephen W. Turner also made his escape with his horse. These were the

“only two of the advance guard that escaped. We were badly done
“for, but we left our mark at the cut, for the rebels had seven killed
“and nine wounded. Among the killed were two first lieutenants and
“one orderly sergeant. After the fighting was all over the wounded
“and prisoners were all conveyed to the residence of Dr. Davenport,
“a surgeon in the rebel army (who, by-the-way, our company had
“taken prisoner a few days before) and he was now at home on parole.
“He showed himself both a good surgeon and a perfect gentleman in
“his treatment of the wounded, for which we were very grateful. Next
“morning the wounded were paroled by Major Calvin Roberts, C. S.
“A., who was in command of the rebels. The prisoners who were not
“wounded badly were marched southward and sad indeed was the part-
“ing with our loved comrades, and all wept at the parting, for going
“to a rebel prison was almost sure death, from disease or worse still,
“starvation. Strange as it may seem, every one of those comrades
“went through Andersonville and lived to get home—at least all but
“one, and he enlisted in the rebel army to get out of Andersonville.
“Nothing more is known of John Welker. The names of those who
“went to Andersonville are, William J. Roney, William H. H. Spittler,
“William Painter, Corporal Henry Fry, John Welker, and Ashley J.
“Frazier, all of Company D Cavalry. Serg’t George Cox and myself
“were so badly wounded we could not be moved. After three weeks I
“was conveyed in Dr. Davenport’s family carriage, accompanied by
“himself and sister, to Rodney, where I signaled the U. S. gun boat
“*Rattler*, and was taken on board and conveyed to Natchez, Miss.”

Adam Decker, of Co. K Inf., who was with his command, through-
out the fight, contributes still other facts making the story quite com-
plete: “About twenty men of Co. K in command of Lieut. Brennan
“were scattered along, riding on the loads of cotton, Lieutenant Bren-
“nan on the front wagon, when the advance was fired on. Lieutenant
“Brennan called for Co. K to rally to the front. We ran, up, formed
“in line and then proceeded up the road on double-quick, but did not
“get very far till we were halted by a volley from the enemy behind
“the fence, on the right of the road, so near that the flash from their
“guns almost reached us. We gave them several volleys in return
“which stopped their firing. Then hearing a noise up the road like
“horses running, and thinking the enemy was charging us, we were

"commanded to fix bayonets, which order was promptly obeyed and the enemy waited for. We soon found they were not coming, so we continued up the road probably one hundred yards. Owing to the darkness of the night we could see nothing, so we turned and went back to the wagons, carrying the wounded with us. Then with bales of cotton we made a sort of fort, with the intention of staying there till morning. But after the officers held a consultation they thought best to try and get to the boats. Sad indeed was the thought, for two of the boys were so badly wounded we could not take them with us. After filling their canteens with water out of ours, and fixing them as comfortable as we could, we left them in the darkness of the night to the mercy of the enemy. Then the infantry, taking the harness off the mules, mounted, and with the cavalry started on an old road, in the darkness, and made its way through in almost perfect silence, except occasionally a groan from some of the boys riding barebacked mules. Well, we got through to the river some time next morning. Soon after our arrival several hundred mounted men, taking an ambulance started for the scene of our disaster. When they arrived at the place they found the wounded men had been taken to an old house near by, and the cotton burned. One of the wounded, whose name I do not remember, was dead; the other, James Sickal, was brought back the following night, and to the great surprise of all, pulled through."

Early in March, '64, was begun the movement known in subsequent history as "Bank's Red River Expedition", and the 10th of this month found the Marine fleet under orders and preparing to join it. A large number of transports had been assembled at Vicksburg, and the embarking of troops, under command of Gen. A. J. Smith, to be transported to Red River, was in progress. General Smith's command which was to go, consisted of the First and Third Divisions of the 16th Corps, and the First and Fourth Divisions of the 17th corps.

The Marine Light Battery, together with many of the horses and mules belonging to the command, were left in camp on shore to make room for other troops, and the Adams, and the quartermaster and Commissary boat FAIRCHILD, also remained behind. The ram FULTON, in charge of Lieutenant Ed. Ellet, was sent to Cairo for repairs, and the ram MONARCH was ordered to return to Greenville, and patrol that part

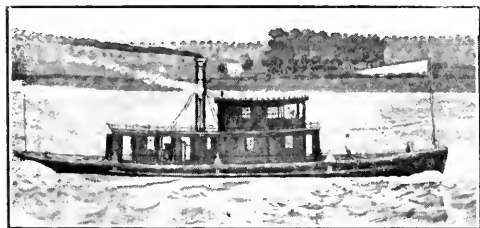
of the river, while the SWITZERLAND was to patrol the vicinity of Grand Gulf.

On the afternoon of the 11th, the Marine boats, and the long line of steamers loaded with Gen. A. J. Smith's troops, reached the mouth of Red River. On the 12th the fleet moved up Old Red River into the Atchafalaya, and in the afternoon anchored at Simsport. Hearing nothing from General Banks, General Smith disembarked a portion of his troops the next day, and sent a brigade under General Mower, to reconnoitre in the vicinity of Yellow Bayou. The enemy had broken camp and retired. General Smith then decided to march the column thirty miles overland to Fort De Russey, while the boats went around to the same point. The land force had advanced but a few miles, when they began to be harrassed from front and rear by the enemy's cavalry, and this continued all the rest of the way across. Capt. E. G. Hughes of Co. C mounted infantry, with some thirty of his men rendered valuable service on this march, and was complimented by General A. J. Smith.

Reaching Fort De Russey in the afternoon of the 14th, it was at once assailed, and two hours later was taken. The Marine Cavalry which was also a part of the advance guard, overland, and which by its dash and daring gained the admiration of Smith's men, participated in this engagement, furnishing a body guard for General Smith, and assisting to drive the Confederates into the fort, and were honored in receiving the first fire from its guns. On the 16th and 17th details were made from the Brigade to assist in the destruction of the Confederate fortifications. At ten p. m. the main fort was blown up, and by the explosion two men were killed, one sergeant wounded, and a Lieutenant of the 81st Illinois had his brains blown out. To the commander and crew of the gunboat *Essex* was committed the perilous task of exploding the Confederate magazine.

The Marines naturally rejoiced in the capture and destruction of this fort, since it was here that on February 14, 1863, their famous QUEEN OF THE WEST was disabled and captured by the rebels. The Marine fleet left Fort De Russey March 18th, at eight o'clock a. m., and reached Alexandria at five o'clock p. m. In coming up the tortuous stream, the *RAIXE* broke her rudder, and was compelled to tie up for the night, a few miles below. A small cotton boat lay some

distance above, and during the night the "Johnnies" took her crew prisoners, and burned the boat. Companies G and K Inf., went to the rescue, but could not overtake the fleeing enemy with their prisoners. While in pursuit of the retreating force, a house a mile from the river was searched and some fifty stands of arms found in it were



Marine Tug Aif. Cutting, Built and Commanded by Master A. M. Granger.

destroyed. On the 26th the Marine Tug Aif. Cutting, Master A. M. Granger in charge, arrived bringing orders from General Sherman, and instructions from General McPherson, assigning the Brigade to patrol the river district between Vicksburg and Greenville. The Cutting was at once sent back with mail and dispatches. On her way to Vicksburg she met with an accident to her engine, by which her engineer was quite severely scalded, but she proceeded safely to her destination.

On the 27th, pursuant to the orders from General Sherman, heretofore given, and the request of General McPherson based thereon, General Banks, retaining the Hospital boat Woodford, relieved the other four Marine boats, and they proceeded to make their way down to the Mississippi, and thence upward, without any incident worthy of note, reaching Vicksburg on March 31st. Here they found the Adams, and were soon after joined by the ram Moxarch and tug Cutting.

The Hospital boat Woodford never again plowed the waters of the Mississippi, in company with her fellows of the Marine fleet. Sad was her fate: far away from her companions—in hostile waters—necessarily abandoned by those whom she had sheltered and cared for in wounds and sickness—she perished, in the prime of her career of usefulness. Detained too long, after the fall of Red River had amply warned of her danger, when at length she was allowed to leave, the attempt to take her over the rocky shoals at Alexandria proved disastrous. She struck the rocks and a hole was torn in her hull causing her to sink and break up, a hopeless wreck. Her crew loyally remained

on her several weeks, in hope of ultimately saving her, and as late as the 26th of April, Lieutenant Howell of the General's staff, was sent with Lieutenant Francis Aid and a detail of twenty men from Co. B infantry, with the ram *Lioness*, to see if anything could be done toward her rescue—but all in vain. About that time the union troops were evacuating Alexandria, and the *Woodford* was dismantled and burned, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. She was a large elegant steamer, splendidly fitted up for hospital purposes, the finest floating hospital on the Mississippi river. Her retention by General Banks was a fatal mistake.

While the boats were up Red River, considerable sugar and molasses was captured, and brought on board by the men, for their own use. The *Baltic's* soldiers secured enough to make quite an available stock in trade, with which to provide themselves extra articles at Vicksburg, for their comfort and use. Among these was a dinner bell, used regularly thereafter by Co. B Inf., and brought home, after the muster-out, by Orderly Sergeant J. M. Fulkerson, a relic which he prizes very highly as a souvenir, of his service on the *Baltic*.



Meantime the Confederates were industriously planning further, and more systematic raids upon the navigation of the Mississippi. And this was not volunteer, guerrilla work by any means. It was originated by the highest Confederate authority in the west, and had the sanction of Jeff. Davis, himself, and all the aid and assistance his administration could give. The purpose and scope of this plan are set forth in a communication from Lieut. Gen. Leonidas Polk to President Davis, under date of March 21, 1864, in which, after elaborating his plan for districting the whole river, and organizing raiding forces in each, he says: "Such an arrangement would effectually prevent the raids that are

"now being made from the river by cavalry who go up and down on
"the 'river fleet' of the enemy, under Ellet, and would give protection
"to such of our planters as might desire to return to the bottoms to
"resume their planting. To accomplish this would require about
"3,000 cavalry and about 30 field gns. . . ." From this extract

the reader can judge of the efficiency of the service the Marine Brigade was performing, when allowed to pursue the object for which it was designed.

On the 31st of March, occurred a change in Department Commanders at Vicksburg, General McArthur succeeding General McPherson. The relations between General McPherson and the Brigade were always of the pleasantest character. General McPherson was always kind, courteous, and appreciative, and the Marines took delight in doing their best in executing his orders. Perhaps no officer under whom it served, better understood the nature and mission of the Marine Brigade, or placed a fairer valuation upon the service it rendered.

Under the direction of the new commander at Vicksburg, on March 31, 1864, two companies of Marine cavalry were sent to protect the men making repairs on the telegraph line, between Vicksburg and Haines' Bluff. On the way it rained heavily, and hailed so that the men were both wet through and received a good pelting beside. At last finding shelter, they made themselves as comfortable as they could, but twice during the night they were routed out on false alarms. During the day the *MONARCH* and the tug *CUTTING* reached the wharf and reported to headquarters. The cavalry detachment returned from Haines' Bluff next day without sighting the enemy. On the 2nd the fleet was busy coaling, and in the afternoon the infantry was out for drill, under Colonel Currie. At noon the *RAIXE* got back from Red river. Her late arrival was due to an accident she incurred while on the way out, and for two days and nights, she lay making repairs. The second night firing was heard near, and above her, on the river, and suspecting something was wrong, she hastily raised steam and moved up stream, to find the little steamer *La Crosse* beset by guerrillas, and all ablaze. This steamer, during the day, had been engaged in taking on cotton. At night she anchored out in the narrow stream, but indiscreetly left her stern line fastened to shore. Discovering her situation, some guerrillas came and opened fire on her. Some thirteen soldiers were on board of her, but only three or four of them were armed. These three or four made what resistance they could, but the attacking party using the stern line, hauled the boat to shore, and set her on fire. Upon her arrival, the *RAIXE* opened fire on

the enemy with her two pieces of artillery. The gunboat *Yankee* also soon after appeared on the scene, and the woods were thoroughly shelled, when the Confederates retired. The *La Crosse* was completely destroyed. One sergeant on her was killed, and her crew, and the soldiers on her, were carried away prisoners. Some of the RAINE's Marines went ashore, and failing to find the enemy, in retaliation arrested some of the citizens and burned some buildings near by the scene.

On the 3rd, in obedience to orders from Headquarters, the RAINE was sent up the Sunflower River, to destroy Confederate crossings on that stream. The mounted infantry were, at the request of General McArthur, sent out in the direction of Haines' Bluff, returning in the evening without any incident of importance. On this day also Co. A Inf. changed quarters to the ADAMS. On the 4th of April, in compliance with orders from Department Headquarters, instructions were issued by General Ellet disorganizing the Marine battery of light artillery. Captain Walling, its commander, entered a vigorous protest, but the matter had been pre-determined by the powers higher up, and the protest was unavailing. During that night, a false alarm caused a Marine company to be sent across the river, to no purpose.

At 7 o'clock in the morning of this same day, the DIANA and ADAMS left Vicksburg, and proceeded up stream, reaching Goodrich's Landing about sunset, where they tied up for the night. At 5 o'clock the next morning they moved on up stream, reaching Skipwith's Landing at noon, with the horses saddled and the men ready to lead off for a scout. The boats went on up around the bend to Carolina Landing, while the troops went across the country. At this point the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th were employed in scouting and drill, as the weather, which was very uncertain, permitted.

Leaving these two boats here, we return to Vicksburg, to gather up the following items for record. April 5th, pursuant to orders from Headquarters, 17th A. C., Capt. C. G. Fisher of Co. E Inf., was appointed Brigade Inspector. By orders from the same source, Sergt. J. D. Metz of Co. D Inf., A. T. Bullard, and thirteen others, heretofore named in a War Department detail, were transferred on their promotion to the African Division. The MOXARCH and SWITZERLAND returned from their trip up the Sunflower, whither they had

been sent to gather information respecting the enemy. On the 6th, the same two rams departed for Yazoo City, on a similar errand, returning on the 8th. On the 9th, the repairs on the *BALTIC* and *RAINE*, which had detained them and the *AUTOCRAT*, were completed, and they all started together up the river, reaching Goodrich's Landing at 3 o'clock p. m. Here they landed to secure information respecting the enemy in that vicinity, and then moved on to Carolina Landing, which was reached early on the morning of the 10th.

The guerrillas were at this time again very active along the river. This was no doubt due, in part at least, to the Confederate plans for systematic raiding before mentioned. For the time being the two Marine rams remained at Vicksburg subject to the immediate orders of General McArthur, as the enemy in the rear of that place was again somewhat troublesome, and the rams were the fleetest vessels available for transfer of troops or sending dispatches.

In the evening of the 10th, the *DIANA* and *ADAMS* were sent below, to procure necessary rations, and then to patrol below the Vicksburg. On the 11th, the fleet (*AUTOCRAT*, *BALTIC* and *RAINE*) passed up to Greenville, and from that point a scout was conducted, out through the Deer Creek country. One prisoner was captured, and two good horses secured. Though the country was full of Confederates, they seemed to keep out of the way of the Marines. Another scout was made on the 12th in the same locality, and during the day Confederate pickets were encountered and driven, but no sight obtained of the main force—reported as five hundred strong. Information, however, was received during the day, of a contraband traffic carried on by the three steamers—the *Henry A. Homeyer*, *Mattie Cook*, and *Lillie Martin*. On the 13th the tug *CUTTING* was dispatched to look after the *Henry A. Homeyer*. The papers of the little steamer *Sylph*, lying just below Greenville, and the *R. E. Hill*, at Columbia, still further down and on the Arkansas side, were also overhauled, and their doings investigated, with the result that all three were held under guard. While these things were occurring, the *BALTIC* was having a somewhat similar experience. Lieut. R. S. Murphy of Co. H Inf., gives this account of it:

LEUTENANT MURPHY'S EXPLOIT AT GRAND LAKE.

While at a landing some miles above Grand Lake, Major Tallerdav, in

command of the *Baltic*, had information that a cotton train, escorted by a company of Johnny Rebs, had arrived at Grand Lake and was having a deal with a cotton trading boat at that place. Whereupon the Major disembarked, with Captain Cox's and Captain Harper's companies, with the intention of capturing the Johnnies, but when he struck the road leading to Grand Lake he concluded the train and escort had gone back into the country. It was that day in command of this road leading to the river, an orderly was there with orders from the Major to proceed to the river, arrest the crew of the trader, and take charge of the craft. Upon nearing the landing this mighty army of twelve men found that, sure enough the train of wagons was gone, but that the guard of Johnnies were still there. I gave the command to charge, and right manfully did these twelve men sail in, and we captured and held, until the battalion arrived, two commissioned officers, and eighteen enlisted men, fully armed and equipped Confederate soldiers. We Marines called that a pretty good take.

In connection with this capture, there was an unfortunate occurrence. When the twelve Marines made their dash and captured the Confederate guard, the trader from the boat and one of his men jumped into his yawl and attempted to escape, and refusing to stop, when ordered to do so, was fired on. The trader then jumped into the water, still hanging on to the side of the yawl. But his partner received a ball through the knee, inflicting a dangerous wound. When these men were rescued and brought to shore, it transpired that they had mistaken Lieut. Murphy and his men for a squad of Quantrell's men, and they preferred taking the desperate chance of escape, to that of falling into the hands of these merciless guerrillas. Lieut. Murphy very graciously forgave these men for the uncomplimentary mistake they made respecting the identity of himself and his men. On the 15th the three boats lay all day at Grand Lake. During the day, orders were received at Headquarters, from the office of the Adjutant General, at Washington, relieving Lieutenants Warren and Bailey, who had been with the Red River expedition, and also notice that the resignation of Lieut. Joseph Wicoff, of Co. C, Cav. (tendered January 23rd), was now accepted. On the 16th the three boats moved up to Ford's Landing, and sent the full mounted force out upon a scout, but without finding any hostile force. The rams now arrived from Vicksburg, bringing instructions from General McArthur for General Ellet to send them on up to Memphis, there to report to General Hubert for duty. During the day the steamer *Lebanon*

was held up and searched, as she was suspected of being engaged in a contraband trade.

Issuing instructions to the *BALTIC* to cruise between Greenville and Lake Providence, the *AUTOCRAT*, accompanied by the *RAINE*, passed down, landing at Skipwith's, at 3 o'clock p. m., remaining there over night, and then going on down to Lake Providence. On the 17th the cavalry was sent out from this point, scouting through to Bayou Mason, and returning to the boats at 5 o'clock, having covered a distance of thirty-five miles without special incident.

On the 20th, the *AUTOCRAT* and *RAINE* proceeded down stream, touching at Goodrich's Landing, and reaching Vicksburg at 5 o'clock p. m. In the evening General McArthur requested a convoy for the supply boat *Clara Evans*, going up to Yazoo City, and General Ellet dispatched a tug below with orders for the *DIANA* and *ADAMS* to come up for that purpose, and they reached Vicksburg at 3 p. m. of the 21st. It will be remembered that these boats parted from the rest of the fleet at Carolina Landing, above Skipwiths. During the night of the 11th, when near Paw Paw Island, a serious accident came near resulting in the loss of both boats. Of this, Capt. I. D. Newell, then in command of the *ADAMS*, furnished the following account:

THE *ADAMS* AND *DIANA* IN COLLISION.

Until late in the evening I was on the hurricane deck with Sailing Master Sol. Malbon, enjoying the clear starlight night. As I was about going below for the night, I said to Malbon, "We are running too close to the *Diana*—you will slack up and take proper distance."

Along toward morning I was awakened from a sound slumber by a terrific crash, which caused the old *Adams* to tremble from stem to stern. Having gone to bed with my final order to Malbon on my mind, I realized in an instant what had occurred. Springing out of my berth, I started up the back stairway to the hurricane roof, the foot of which was near my outside stateroom door. I was thinking mighty fast, and along with a painful realization of my responsibilities as the commander of the boat, and into my mind was flashed the picture of a possible struggle in an angry current for the distant shore, and what preparation would be necessary should I have to take to the water. Reaching the forward part of the boat, I found Malbon, who had just issued from the "texas," swearing, sputtering, and raging like a mad man. The pilot had disregarded the caution given after my instructions, and had again shortened the distance for safe running. The river was low, the *Diana* had struck a sand bar, and we were too close upon her to either change our course or stop in time to prevent a collision, and so we had struck her a staggering blow on her larboard side, cutting off about fifteen feet of her stern

guard, crushing in her hull close down but not quite to the water line, demolishing one or two of the animal stalls in her boiler deck, and dropping a horse and a cow into the river. Some one on the *Diana* called over to "Old Sol," (as Sailing Master Malbon was familiarly called) to save the horse. But in his well known stammering utterance, interspersed with oaths, he shouted back: "S-s-s-save n-n-n-nothing --- - --- All g-g-g-go to --- - t-t-t-to-gether." When the *Adams* backed away from the *Diana*, her jackstaff was down, her nosing was turned off, and a hole was discovered in her bow through which water in a considerable stream was rushing into her hold. Master Malbon ordered a tarpaulin thrown down over her bow and started her for the shore, the pressure from the headway crowding the tarpaulin up tight over the hole and stopped the inflow of water. General Ellet humorously proposed putting the *Adams* into the ram fleet, but yielded (!) to my earnest protest against so doing.

The two boats at once proceeded to Vicksburg, arriving at 7 o'clock a. m. the next morning, and repairs on both were promptly begun. This proved no small undertaking, it being necessary to build a kind of dry dock for the bow of the *Adams*. But the boatmen of the Marine fleet were sufficient for almost anything short of the full construction of a steamer.

While waiting for the repairs, Colonel Currie kept his men in healthful exercise by daily drill. On the 16th the repairs to the boats were completed, and at midnight they moved down to Carthage, where early the next morning a detachment of infantry went out on the Louisiana side on a scout, returning at 5 o'clock, with several bales of cotton and a number of prisoners. On the 18th, Colonel Currie, in command of four companies of mounted infantry, made an extended scout to Bayou Tensas, returning at 10 o'clock p. m., bringing in as prisoners, some members of a guerrilla band which had recently been engaged in robbing government plantations, stealing horses, and in some cases murdering persons found on these plantations.

In one case, it was said, they took an old man found in charge of a negro hospital, and after cutting off his ears, in a brutal manner shot him to death. Numbers of such bands were reported as being in that vicinity.

On the 19th Co. D Inf. went out and brought in some cotton. On the 21st the two boats started for Vicksburg, having received the orders brought them from General Ellet, by the tug *DARLINGTON*, reaching the city at 3 p. m. On the day of the arrival of the *DIANA*

and ADAMS from below, the FAIRCHILD also reached Vicksburg from St. Louis, with fresh supplies, and Lieuts. E. C. Ellet and G. C. Doan returned on her from leaves of absence.

The DIANA and ADAMS, convoying the supply boat, started up the Yazoo, on the 22nd, reaching and landing at Liverpool Heights at noon of the same day. Here news was received of the capture of Yazoo City by the enemy. The ADAMS proceeded still further up stream to reconnoitre, but soon returned, reporting also the capture of the tinclad gunboat *Number Five*. Immediate preparations were therefore made for the evacuation of Liverpool by its garrison of negro troops. The mounted infantry were put ashore, for an overland trip to Haines' Bluff, while the negro regiments garrisoning the place, were taken on board, and at 3 o'clock a. m. of the 23rd the DIANA and ADAMS started down stream. Haines' Bluff was reached at noon. There the negro troops were put ashore, the Marine infantry again taken on board, and the boats proceeded to Vicksburg, arriving there at 10 o'clock p. m.

On the 24th, as directed by General McArthur, a Marine guard was furnished, to escort the captured cotton trading boat Belfast to Memphis. About this time it was arranged to make an exchange between the Flag Ship AUTOCRAT and the Quartermaster boat FAIRCHILD, the Quartermaster's supplies thereafter to be carried on the AUTOCRAT and the troops on the AUTOCRAT to be quartered on the FAIRCHILD. On the 25th instructions were issued from Brigade headquarters for Maj. J. R. Crandall to pass below with the RAINE, to be joined later by the FAIRCHILD with the rest of the cavalry battalion. Instructions were also issued Colonel Currie to proceed up stream with the DIANA and ADAMS to where the BAIRIE might be found, and taking her also under his command, patrol that part of the river, arresting all trading boats wherever found.

In compliance with these several instructions, the RAINE left the Vicksburg wharf on the 25th at 3 o'clock p. m., and pushed down stream, while at 11 o'clock p. m. the DIANA and ADAMS started on their mission, in the opposite direction. All night and all day these two steamers ploughed their way against the rapid current without a single stop, until 5 o'clock p. m., the 26th, they reached Skipwith's

Landing. Here Colonel Currie with Co. E Inf. started out in search of the *BALRIC*, and after riding about ten miles up the river, she was found in the bend above. Major Tallerday had arrested the trader, Lebanon, and going on board this vessel with his escort, Colonel Currie returned to the *DIANA* about 11 o'clock p. m. On the 27th, the *Effort*, and one other cotton trader, were arrested and tied up, near the boats. In the evening preparatory orders were issued for a scout in the morning.

At 5 o'clock a. m. of the 28th, the mounted infantry and the two howitzers under command of Colonel Currie, pushed out toward Bayou Mason. Upon reaching this stream, it was found that the bridge over it was destroyed. While he remained here with a part of the command, to superintend the construction of a temporary bridge, Colonel Currie sent Captain Newell, in command of companies A, F and E, up stream, with instructions, in case a ford could be found, to cross over and form a junction with him, on the other side. No ford was found, but some timbers were discovered on the other side of the bayou, to secure which some of Newell's men stripped and swam across. While these men were on the other side of the bayou, some Confederates were seen not far away. The boys gathered up their guns (which they had not forgotten to take with them) and in nature's full dress started after the "Johnnies." But the enemy showed fight, and the Marines thinking how comfortable it would be if captured to have their clothes on, fired a few shots and hastily recrossed the bayou. As no crossing could be effected here, Captain Newell with his detachment returned to the rest of the command, to find that a temporary bridge had been constructed, in crossing which, however, a horse in one of the howitzer teams was drowned. In the meantime several groups of the enemy were seen in the timber on the other side, which seemed to indicate the massing of some unknown force. It was known that Quantrell was in this section, with his men. And so, with a deep bayou between him and his boats and a very flimsy bridge for a crossing, Colonel Currie concluded it imprudent, without further information respecting the character and strength of the enemy, to risk an encounter, and hence recrossed the bayou and returned to the boats, having captured four prisoners. The *BALRIC* dropped down in the evening and tied up near the other boats. The arrested cotton boats were sent to Vicksburg. Orders were received here, announcing that General Slocum had succeeded General McArthur, in command at Vicksburg.



CHAPTER VII

MAY, - - - 1864

After the Raiders.—Heavy Artillery Mounted on Marine Boats.—First Encounter with Marmaduke's Men.—Boats Fighting Field Artillery at the Columbia Bend.—Convoying Passenger Transports Past a Ten-Gun Battery.—Infantry Boats Aboard Scouting.—Marine Cavalry Boats and Two Rams Up the Yazoo to Support McArthur's Raid.—How the Marine Cavalry "Surprised" Adams Camp.—Return of a Bootless Expedition.

On the 30th of April, 1864, the *Autocrat* came up the river and joined the rest of the fleet at Ashton, La., and the rest of the day was spent in inspection and muster. May 1st Co. B Inf., changed quarters from the *Autocrat* to the *Baltic*. During the forenoon Co. C. Inf. was sent out to reconnoitre, and a couple of spies, sent out to Bayou Mason, reported having seen about thirty Confederate soldiers. Immediately after dinner the entire command moved out for an expedition.

It was planned for companies B, G, H and I Inf., with the two howitzers, under command of Colonel Currie, to move straight for the bayou, some five miles distant, revisiting on the way the place where Colonel Currie had built a temporary bridge across the bayou, while Captain Newell, in command of companies A, D, F and K, was to proceed down the river, and reach an appointed rendezvous, several miles below.

Newell's detachment was first at the appointed place, and was found by Colonel Currie, standing on guard against possible attack from the enemy, and at the same time expectantly watching for the coming of the rest of the command. Nothing of importance occurred during the march of either detachment, though Colonel Currie's ad-

vance had exchanged shots with a few of the enemy, who quickly disappeared. The whole command returned to the boats about dark, bringing with them a number of fat cattle. During the day the *MONARCH* passed down with dispatches for Old River.

The next day, the movement of the different boats scattered the fleet in different directions. The *ATROCITY* went back to Vicksburg, the *BALTIC* returned to her former station, a few miles above, the *DIANA*, leaving her barge and the four little cotton boats with a guard of thirty men and the howitzer, went to Greenville, and the *ADAMS*, dropping a short distance below, passed up into an old bend of the river.

The *DIANA* reached Greenville about 8 o'clock in the evening, and at once Colonel Currie sent his orderly, with four men, out for the arrest of a citizen, who was brought on board the *DIANA*. This man was later permitted to go ashore, and disappeared in the darkness. On this day the second engineer of the *BALTIC* was discharged for drunkenness.

On the morning of the 3rd, the infantry companies on the *DIANA* went out on a scout. While out the force separated, Co. E being received on board the boat at Greenville, and the rest at Skipwith's Landing. Four prisoners were captured during the day. From Skipwith's the *DIANA* returned down stream, landing on the way for a short time alongside the *BALTIC*, and at 10 o'clock p. m., reached the point below, where she left her barge on the morning of the 2nd. The record shows that during her absence the guard left with the barge had experienced considerable uneasiness, in view of the known proximity and alertness of the enemy. During the temporary absence of Lieutenant Dean from his detail, the little steamer *Effort* slipped her cable, and crossed over to the east bank of the river. The Lieutenant having left no special directions with the men for such an emergency, they did not feel warranted in detaining her. But when Lieutenant Dean returned, he ordered one of the howitzers loaded up, and sent a ball from it across the bow of the *Effort*, and she promptly returned to the west bank. The apology for her leaving was, that knowing how thick and daring the Confederates were, they thought she would be safer on the other side.

The *ADAMS* in command of Captain Newell, descending the river

a few miles, forced an entrance into what was known as "Old River," where a barge already loaded with corn, supposed to be intended for Confederate use, was known to be in hiding, and where it was also known that thousands of bushels of fine corn were in store. "Old River" was originally a large bend in the Mississippi. The river having changed its channel, the current had closed up the upper end of the old bend by washing in sand. The lower end of the bend, though still opening into the river, was very narrow and was heavily overhung with willows. It was all the *ADAMS* could do to crowd herself through this narrow, obstructed inlet. But once through, "Old River" was found to be a deep, wide, beautiful sheet of water—a veritable lake. Here the *ADAMS* remained until the 10th, loading corn, and guarding the barge previously mentioned as already loaded. The upper end of this "Old River" was grown up with large trees, standing in the water, and was full of fish, which could be plainly seen through the clear, placid waters. During their stay, some of the officers had spears made for them by the boat's blacksmith, and the crew for a time had plenty of fresh fish. The enemy was known to be in force in that vicinity, and the boat with sufficient steam at all times to move her, was kept at a distance from the shore, her guns shotted and trained, and sentinels stationed, night and day, upon her hurricane deck. At one time it was reported that a force with a battery was moving in for an attack upon the boat, but no enemy appeared.

On the 11th, as per orders issued the night before, the four companies from the *DIANA*, under command of Captain Hughes, went out for a reconnoissance. They took the road from the river direct toward Bayou Mason. They encountered some difficulty in crossing the intervening streams, which had backed up and overflowed, from the recent heavy rise in the river, and the difficulty in crossing these streams was even greater on the return trip, since during the day the river had risen several inches. Reaching the bayou, the four companies crossed over on Colonel Currie's temporary bridge, and reaching the highlands on the other side, made a circuit of four or five miles, and began their return about noon. The main column reached the boat about 2 o'clock p. m., and the rear guard about an hour later.

bringing in a load of cotton and a number of fat cattle. Toward evening the *Baltic* sent down another cotton-trading steamer, which had been captured by her.

On the 5th the *DIXIA* moved up to Ashton, where Co. E Inf. was put ashore. The mission of this company at this time, was to escort across the bayou a woman who had visited the boat to see about some cotton, and had remained on board over night. At the bayou some persons claiming to be citizens were found ferrying cotton across on a raft. A part of the company was left there to guard the bridge, while a small detachment from it went across. Amos W. Bellows, who had charge of the advance, says in his diary: "After crossing the bayou the rebs were thick as the hairs on a dog's back. I wished I had never seen a woman, about this time. She could ride with the best of us. We soon left her, however, and returned."

After putting Co. E ashore at Ashton, the *DIXIA* proceeded up to Carolina Landing, on the Mississippi side, where all the rest of the infantry disembarked. Colonel Currie with Co. D went up stream for a reconnoissance, while companies C and F, under command of Captain Hughes, moved out on the Skipwith Landing road, some distance, and thence to, and down Bayou Washington. Co. D returned to the boat about sunset, and the other two companies, after dark. After the troops were on board, the *DIXIA* returned to Ashton, picked up Co. E, and dropped down to the place from which she started in the morning. During the 6th, the command remained on the boats inactive. About 9 o'clock in the evening the *DIXIA*, with the *Sylph* in tow, went up to Grand Lake, where the *Baltic* still lay. At 5 o'clock on the morning of the 7th the four mounted companies of infantry, C, D, E and F, went out under command of Colonel Currie, proceeding to, and crossing Bayou Mason on a raft. This proved a tedious job, as the raft was capable of carrying only four men and their horses at a time. The command was all across, however, by 8 o'clock. Moving out from the crossing, about a dozen wagons were met, loaded with cotton, to be ferried over and transported to the river. The general course of the march was down the bayou and back from it. At a distance of some eight miles, the command divided, companies C and F, under command of Captain Hughes, going further to the right. Colonel Currie's detachment proceeded to a

point where it was expected, from reports received, to find a Confederate picket post of ten men. They reached this point on a charge, and chased the picket some two miles without capturing them. At this place the command fed their horses, ate their dinners and waited the coming of Captain Hughes with his detachment. In the meantime Captain Hughes had discovered and raided a station where goods, secured from trading boats on the river and smuggled through the line, were kept in store—a regular Confederate supply station. About a dozen Confederates were found guarding the place, of whom two were captured, while the rest fled before the fire of the Marines. A team was pressed into service, and the stock in trade, which was considerable, was taken to the boats. Colonel Currie's command reached the boat about 9 o'clock at night, and Captain Hughes' detachment about midnight.

Paymaster Hanna having arrived the evening before, the men were paid off on the 8th. In the evening a party sent in a yawl up "Old River," with orders for the ADAMS to rejoin the fleet, was fired into on the way. By the volley, a hole was opened in the side of the yawl, so large that the men had to caulk it up with their coats. Fortunately no one was hurt. On the 9th, about 5 o'clock a. m., Captain Hughes, with companies C and F, again started out to revisit, and make further search of the locality where he made his capture two days before. The bayou was reached and crossed by 8 o'clock. After crossing, company C was sent on the route taken by Colonel Currie on the previous occasion, while Co. F, for some reason, stopped at a house about a half a mile distant from the bayou. In the course of about fifteen minutes Co. F, with some impressed teams, started in another direction. Captain Hughes, with two or three men as an advance guard, was riding a short distance ahead of the company, and as they ascended a little rise of ground upon which, in the midst of some trees, stood a church building, a squad of concealed Confederates threw themselves out of their hiding place, and shouted to the advance guard, now about ten rods distant, to surrender. The leader of the advance denounced them with an oath, and immediately wheeled and galloped to the rear. The Confederates sent a volley after them, but no one was hit. Driven back with his advance guard, Captain Hughes at once deployed the company, and returned the

fire, upon which the Confederates disappeared. The attacking party was thought to be the picket of a considerable force, reported somewhere in this vicinity. Captain Hughes reunited his two companies as quickly as possible, and after going in the direction taken by Co. C, about half a mile, it was met returning to the assistance of their comrades—having heard the volley of the enemy, and the reply thereto. The two companies then fell back to the bayou, and dispatched two messengers to the river for reinforcements. Between 12 and 1 o'clock Colonel Currie appeared upon the scene, bringing companies D and E with one of the howitzers. Taking Co. E and the little "bull-dog," the Colonel crossed over the bayou, leaving Co. D to protect the ferry, and moved out to the place of the recent encounter. From this point several squads were sent in different directions, but nothing further was seen of the enemy. They doubtless were familiar with the couplet:

"He who fights and runs away,

May live to fight another day,"

and were saving themselves for future conflicts.

The entire command reached the river at 6 o'clock, to find the ADAMS at the landing, her men having been paid off in the meantime.

Previous to Colonel Currie's start to reinforce Captain Hughes, the BALDIC had taken her departure for Greenville, and early on the morning of the 10th, the ADAMS followed the BALDIC. No complete record is extant of the doings of the BALDIC and ADAMS during their separation from the DIANA. The following incident, related in the diary of Orderly Sergt. J. M. Fulkerson, of Co. B Inf., is all we can relate of what transpired during this period. His diary says:

"We arrived early this forenoon (13th) at Egg Point, and a squad of our company went out with the mounted infantry on a scout. Lieutenant Benson took the advance guard and I was also with the advance. We stopped when we got out about six miles and the Lieutenant sent an advance guard a hundred yards or so ahead, while we stopped there to rest. Presently a rebel came riding down the road and came nearly up to our advance guard before he saw them, and then surrendered. We took from him a splendid revolver and he said it was such a good joke on him getting captured, he thought he would like to have company, and told us of another rebel in the second house up the road, who was there, seeing his sweetheart. Lieutenant Benson took part of the advance and surrounded the first house and I took the balance of

the advance and surrounded the second house. A young lady begged of me not to search the house, but we had it to do, and we found the rebel up stairs, covered up in bed. On this scout we captured two rebels, two horses and seven mules. We took the Greenville road and arrived there about dark, and found the Baltie there waiting for us.

On the 10th Major Hanna having finished his work as Paymaster, left for Vicksburg, the passing steamer "Dunleith" being hailed in for his accommodation. The gun-squad on the DIANA was now by special order, excused from all other duty, and ordered to sleep at night on the deck, beside their guns. It was now learned that the enemy had destroyed the raft which had been used by the Marines for crossing Bayou Mason. During the 11th Colonel Currie went out to the bayou, taking with him Captain Hughes and twenty men. With the help of some negroes and citizens anxious to cross over, the Colonel and his men gathered up the scattered material of the old raft, which had floated below, and with great labor reconstructed it, and then poled, towed, and paddled it back to its place. In the meantime Co. E had been sent for, and had arrived. Taking part of the men, Colonel Currie and Captain Hughes crossed over and reconnoitered a distance of two miles on two different roads, finding no trace of the enemy. Before crossing, the Colonel had instructed the men of Co. E, left behind, (about twenty in number), to conceal themselves in a clump of bushes, from which they could concentrate their fire on the raft, should an enemy appear to attempt its destruction during the early part of the night. But the Colonel's trap was not sprung, and the men, after having remained in hiding until after midnight, without seeing or hearing anything, returned to the boats.

At 5 o'clock p. m., on the 11th, the DIANA dropped down to Princeton, two miles below on the Mississippi side, and tied up for the night. The 12th and 13th were spent in quiet on the DIANA, but about 8 o'clock p. m. she hauled in her hawser, and headed again up stream, landing at Grand Lake.

On the morning of the 14th the companies on the DIANA were aroused at 1 o'clock and ordered to feed, get breakfast, and prepare for the march. Proceeding under command of Colonel Currie straight to the old crossing on Bayou Mason, the command was ferried

over on the raft recently rebuilt, and which had not been disturbed. Once, being too heavily loaded, the raft took water and sank, but being near shore, no serious consequences ensued. When all were over, with Lieutenant Dean and company D for advance guard, the Colonel pushed straight up the bayou toward Lake Village. About half way to that place, a Confederate soldier with his arms was found and captured, and further on several good horses were confiscated. Lake Village was reached at 3 o'clock p. m. and was entered at a dash. It was known beforehand, that some Confederate soldiers (among them a colonel) were in the place. Some five or six rebels were found and made prisoners. Some of them were discovered behind the plastering of the house they were in, and, as Amos W. Bellows of Co. F Inf., says, "Were hauled out like rabbits out of a hollow tree." Either the colonel, reported as being here, made timely flight, or else his hiding place was so well chosen as to elude discovery, for he was not captured.

Leaving Lake Village at 5 o'clock p. m., the command moved on to Luna Landing, where both the *DIANA* and *ADAMS* were found awaiting them. It was 11 o'clock when the men reached the river, after midnight before horses were fed, and the men had eaten their own suppers, and tired and lame, tumbled into their bunks. But the Marines were used to it—expected it—delighted in it—and were never known to grumble at active army service. Before the *DIANA* left Grand Lake in the morning, two deserters from the Confederate army came in, and gave themselves up. The companies on the *ADAMS* were also out during the day, and did not return until some time during the night.

The 15th was granted the men and horses for rest. The *BALRIC* went down from Greenville, and lay a few hours, and then returned. On the morning of the 16th, the *DIANA* dropped down from Luna Landing to Grand Lake, and a detachment from Co. E was sent out to the bayou, to see if the raft had been interfered with. It was found intact. A Confederate deserter came on board in the morning and gave himself up. Rumors were rife about this time that the Confederates were massing, across the bayou, with considerable artillery, and probably intending an attack upon the boats.

The ram *HORNER* left one barge of coal during the night of the

16th, and went on down with the other barges to Vicksburg. All the 17th and was spent in taking coal from the barge left. The 18th and 19th were also spent in quiet at Grand Lake.

On the 20th, the *DIANA* moved up stream taking the coal barge with her. About noon the *BALTIC* and *ADAMS* were met coming down, and all three boats landed near Lakeport, on the Arkansas side. Here the *DIANA* left her horse-barge, with a guard of thirty-two men, with four days' rations, took on the prisoners from the *BALTIC*, and started for Vicksburg, reaching that place at 2 o'clock a. m. of the 21st.

The *BALTIC* and *ADAMS* spent the 21st in taking coal. Then the former went back to Greenville, leaving the *ADAMS* to follow. Anchoring the coal barge out in the river, and taking the *DIANA*'s horse-barge with its guard, the *ADAMS* spent the night struggling against the swift current, and landed near the *BALTIC*, at Greenville, at 3 o'clock the next morning.

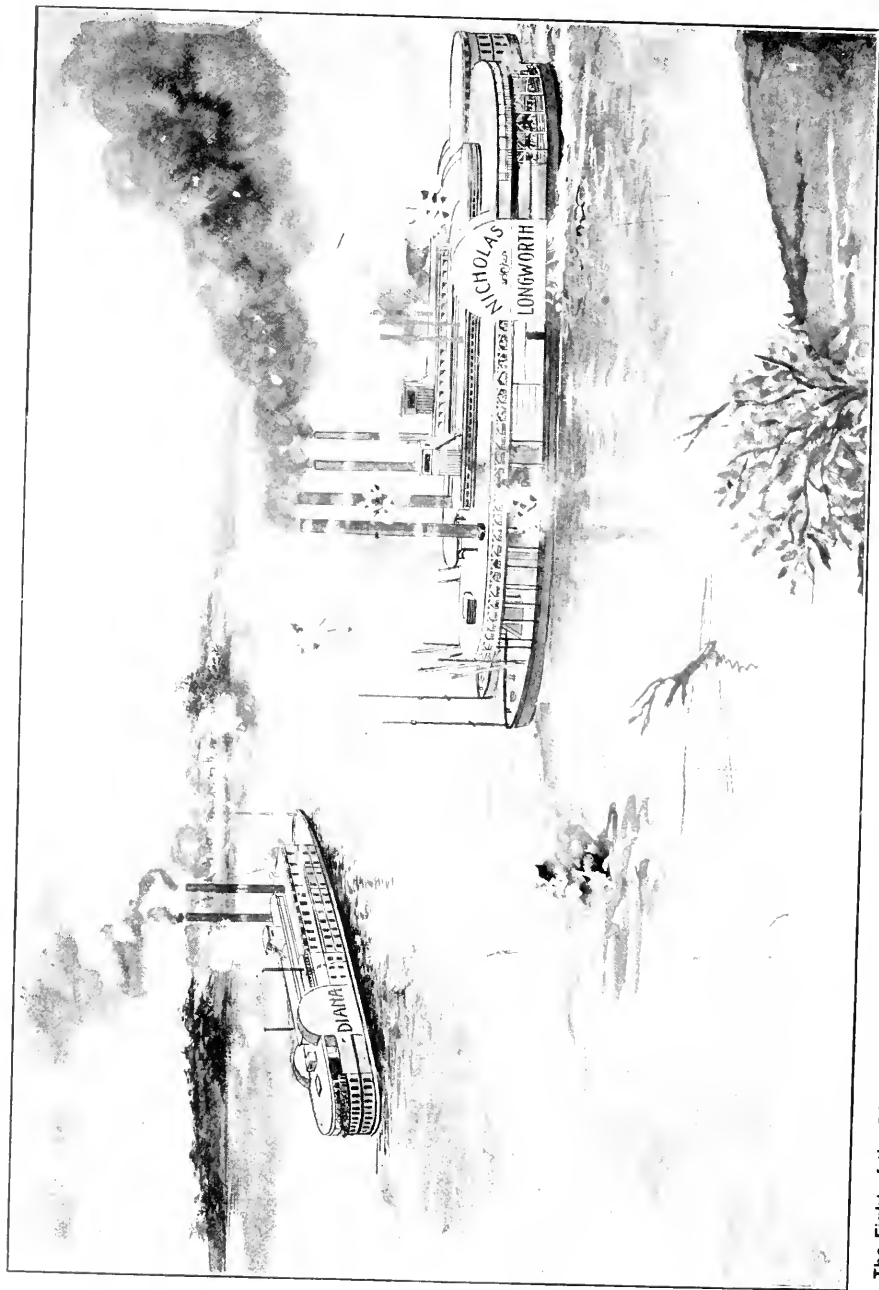
The 22nd was Sunday. It was spent by the *DIANA*'s crew at Vicksburg, getting rations, artillery, and ammunition on board, building gun-decks, etc. At 4 o'clock p. m., she left, going up stream.

On the evening of the 22nd, Co. B infantry from the *BALTIC*, was sent out on a reconnoissance, but saw nothing. On the 23rd the entire force from both *BALTIC* and *ADAMS* were out, under Major Tallerdoy. Two companies of the enemy were seen and fired upon, when they precipitately fled, and could not afterwards be found. During the night the *DIANA* landed near the *BALTIC* and *ADAMS*, at Greenville. On the way up during the night, when above Grand Lake, a great light was seen on the river, and a hail was heard coming across the water from the bank. A yawl was sent ashore, and the hailing party found to be the crew of the cotton boat "*Lebanon*." The Confederates had captured her, put her crew ashore, and set her on fire. The forenoon of the 24th was spent in completing the mounting of the guns, all the men being kept busy as bees at this, in anticipation of warm work. By noon the guns were in position on the boats. One twenty-pound Parrott, and two twelve-pound brass pieces were placed on the *DIANA*; on the *BALTIC* one twenty-pound, and two ten-pound pieces; and on the *ADAMS*, two Rodman guns and two brass field pieces.

General Marmaduke, it was said, had recently made the boast that now that Banks was out of the way, his next business would be to come to the Mississippi and demolish the Marine Brigade, and with that out of the way they could capture and burn transports, ad libitum. He was now near Greenville, on the Arkansas side, to put his threat into execution. Very soon his advance had planted a battery just below Greenville. It was an ideal place for attacking transports. Just above Greenville the river comes down from the north, makes a sharp bend, then runs some distance northeast, then turns, near Greenville, and shoots off southwest, thus making a long, narrow sharp peninsula, or tongue of land, reaching from the mainland northeastwardly. Above Greenville, in the bend on the Arkansas side, nestled the little village of Columbia, and below Greenville, in the bend on the same side of the river, were two or three landings, the upper known as Leland's, a second as Griffith's, and the third Sunnyside, opposite the point of Chicot Lake. From Columbia above, around this peninsula to Sunnyside below, was a distance of five or six miles, while the distance across to either landing was scarcely a mile, so that a battery planted at either point, could fire on a transport going by and then limber up, run across the peninsula, while she was going round the point, and be ready for her again as she passed the other landing. The following account of what transpired in the afternoon of the very day that Colonel Currie got his guns mounted on the boats, written the next day, by some Marine (signing himself "Johnson") and which appeared in the St. Louis (Mo.) *Democrat* a few days later, is a substantially correct version of the affair:

DIANA DEFENDS BALTIC AND HER CONSORT AT LELAND.

On the 24th inst., we witnessed a sharp engagement between the U. S. Steamer Diana and a rebel battery of eight guns, at Leland Landing, Ark., just below and in sight of Greenville, Mississippi. The steamer Delta, a cotton boat, in attempting to pass up the river, was fired upon by artillery at Columbia, Ark., and reported the fact to the Tinclad Number Eleven, then lying off Greenville, asking for a convoy, and was referred by her to Colonel Currie, then also at Greenville with his three boats, Diana, Baltic and Adams. In the meantime the steamer Longworth, loaded with passengers and a heavy freight of Government stores, came down reporting being fired upon at Columbia, Ark., by infantry and artillery, receiving some ten or twelve shots from artillery, but fortunately no one was injured. Failing to capture her here



The Fight of the Diana and Baltic with Marmaduke's Battery, on the Point Below Greenville. Diana Rounds to, Engaging the Artillery in View. While the Baltic Passes Down with her Convoy Loaded with Passengers, Firing as She Goes.

they hurried their battery across to the other side of the point, a distance of about three-fourths of a mile. Here they expected to make a sure thing of capturing the Longworth, but the Colonel discovered their design in time to make a slight alteration in the rebel program. Leaving the Adams to guard the barges, he ordered the Baltic to be lashed to the Longworth, and both put on all the steam they could carry and run the blockade, while he with the Diana, would engage and receive the fire of the battery.

The Diana proceeded down and opened fire with her twenty-pound Parrott, gradually closing up until her twelve-pound Napoleon would reach. The enemy remained silent until the Longworth came along completely shielded by the BALTIC. The rebels now plied their guns vigorously, paying all their compliments to the Baltic two, three, four guns, and then the whole battery at once. Shot, shell, and canister flew at a terrific rate for a few moments, the Baltic replying, firing her guns as she passed—the Diana facing the music with three, and fought the battery alone until they took up their retreat.

The Baltic was hit nine times, and her chimneys completely riddled with canister. One shell burst in her wheelhouse, another in her cabin, killing Richard Howard, of Co. H Infantry. Howard was the last of three brothers killed in the Union army—all by cannon ball, and all hit in the head. Two other men on the Baltic were slightly wounded. The Diana was unharmed.

In making the attack on boats at this point, there was no levee shelter for the rebels, the bank sloping some distance back from the water. Sergeant Fulkerson, who was in charge of the Parrott gun squad on the starboard quarter of the BALTIC during that run, remembers distinctly their long line of field artillery, in plain view, on the beach, and the lively work of their guns. During this engagement John V. Salmon of Co. B Inf., while lifting on a heavy gun, was seriously injured and for years since the war has been an invalid, moving about in a wheel chair.

It subsequently transpired that it was no fragmentary force of roving guerrillas with which the brigade was contending. Marmaduke with six thousand men, a considerable proportion of whom were mounted, was in the immediate vicinity, and was supporting these attacks with six or more pieces of artillery. All the boats spent the night at Greenville.

On the 25th, carpenters were kept busy all the forenoon repairing the gun platforms and enlarging the port holes. Heavy cannonading had been heard during the forenoon, supposed to be the gunboat

Louisville, which had passed up stream in the morning. In the afternoon, leaving the *ADAMS* still in charge of the barges, the *DIANA* and *BALTIC* moved up stream. Nothing was seen until above Columbia, when a cloud of dust, indicating a moving column of the enemy, was observed about a mile distant. The Parrott gun on the *DIANA* was trained on them and fired, and they were last seen heeling it for the timber. The two boats continued on up stream some two or three miles, when they met two tinclads conveying the *James Watson*, and the *Fulrox* with a tow of coal, and a new horse-barge for the Brigade. The tinclads were relieved, and the *DIANA* and *BALTIC* returned to Greenville conveying the two steamers.

The 26th was without anything of startling interest. In the afternoon the *DIANA* ran up to Columbia and anchored off that place. During her stay a detachment of the enemy stole up behind the levee and fired a volley, but they fired only once, and then were quickly shelled into retreat behind the levee. The *DIANA* later dropped down again to Greenville. The *Leviathan* and *Empress* came down stream during the afternoon, and at their request the *BALTIC* and *ADAMS* conveyed them past Leland Landing.

On the 27th at 3 o'clock a. m. the men on the three boats were aroused and ordered to feed, saddle their horses, and make ready for a scout. About sunrise, with Colonel Currie in command, the force made a scout of about thirty miles, without special results. The enemy were several times seen and fired upon, but would not stand for a fight. By the accidental discharge of his gun, that day, a man on the *Aurocrat*, whose name has not been preserved, lost his leg. It is noted, however, that by curious coincidence Chief Surgeon Roberts that day rejoined the fleet, from leave, after the loss of his hospital boat *Woodroop*.

During the 28th the enemy made no demonstration on the river in the immediate vicinity of the boats, but on the 29th the transport *Rocket* with General Thomas and staff on board, was fired upon near Griffith's Landing, a short distance below, and she was roughly handled. The *DIANA* ran down and fired a few shots, but the enemy had retired. The *BALTIC* and *ADAMS* took the *Rocket* past Columbia, and some distance beyond, but finding the enemy in too great force, and too favorably located, to risk an encounter, returned to Green-

ville with their convoy. On the morning of the 30th the ADAMS took the Rocket along side, to get her past Columbia, while the DIANA and BALTIC followed to see fair play. The enemy made but slight showing, and the BALTIC and ADAMS returned to Greenville, while the DIANA anchored off Columbia, until 5 o'clock p. m., and then dropped down to Greenville. General McArthur with his wife and two or three children were on the Rocket. While the three boats were away, guerrillas came in to Greenville, and sunk a coal barge containing only a few hundred bushels of coal. At 9 o'clock a. m. of the 31st the DIANA went up stream to shell Columbia, and the BALTIC went down to Leland on a like errand. After lying off the lower place some time, the BALTIC returned to Greenville. The DIANA, however, spent the day at her post. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon she was assailed by an infantry fire from the levee, which, however, did no damage. The DIANA raised anchor and pushed close in to shore, with every man at his post, but the enemy hid behind this levee and not one showed himself, and after throwing a few shells the DIANA dropped down to Greenville. During the day the BALTIC passed down to Griffith's Landing, where she shelled the shore, and while doing this, as one of the gun squads was ramming home a cartridge, a premature explosion occurred, blowing off the right forearm of J. K. Perriman, of Co. B, Inf. The injured man calmly holding what was left of his arm with his remaining hand, walked unassisted into the cabin, where surgical attention was at once given him. The ATROCITY came up from below, and accompanied the BALTIC back to Greenville. During that day a man fell out of one of the ATROCITY's portholes, and was drowned.

The MONARCH now returned from detached duty at Memphis, and joined the fleet, just in time to prove her fighting qualities as a gunboat.

During the 1st of June the boats lay in quiet at Greenville, but on the 2nd, the ADAMS and MONARCH had another encounter with the enemy. Of this engagement Captain Newell, then in command of the ADAMS, gave this account.

THE FIGHT OF THE ADAMS AND MONARCH AT COLUMBIA BEND.

Lieut. E. H. Nichols of the Light Artillery, was returning from Memphis, where he had been sent in charge of prisoners, on the evening of June 1,

when the transport he was on, was hailed by a Tinclad Patrol, and informed of the guerrilla operations thereabouts, and of a battery just below, that it would not be safe to attempt to pass. Obtaining a yawl the Lieutenant pulled down stream, in the night, to the Marine fleet, and reported to General Ellet. At a very early hour next morning I was notified by an orderly from the General to arouse my command and order preparations for immediate duty, and then report in person for instructions. I found that it was first intended that Colonel Currie with the *Diana*, should undertake the task assigned, but some injury to that boat's boilers in the recent fighting, made it unsafe for her to raise high steam that day, so the duty fell to me. Arrived on the *Autoerat* the General informed me that I was to go up to Columbia Bend with the *Adams*, and if I deemed it possible, pass the battery and bring the transport down. The General further explained to me that while he did not wish me to take any unwarranted risk of losing my boat, he felt anxious that what was proposed should be accomplished, because of some slighting remarks said to have been made by the tinclads, respecting our fighting proclivities. The General further informed me that the *Ram Monarch*, commanded by Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet, would attend us, the Colonel having generously waived all considerations of rank, and consenting to act under me, and with me as the leader of the expedition.

I knew of course it was safer to run any battery than to turn tail on it and return to General Ellet with the excuse that it couldn't be done, and so from the first, determined to go by the battery or to the bottom of the river. I saw and talked with Colonel Ellet, and arranged with him to take the lead, and if possible unmask and engage the battery, while we, fighting as best we could, should pass by. Just as we were ready to let go, the transport *Missouri* came up the river, and was hailed in, and I was instructed to lash her to my starboard side and take her along with me. Everything being now ready, the ram moved up to where the battery was and steadying herself in the current, began the fight. But not a single shot was fired at her in return, from the moment the *Adams* and her consort got within range. I took my position in the pilot house because I feared my pilot, who was a nervous man (but who proved himself clear grit) might push the boats over upon the bar, which showed well out on the side opposite the battery.

In this upward passage the guns of the battery were trained high, as I subsequently learned, in hopes to reach the pilot houses and so disable us. Consequently in going up, there was no loss of life. One woman was wounded in the foot by a shell which exploded on the *Missouri*; but slight damage was done on our boat. The shots, however, whistled thick and fast about the pilot house, peppered the smoke stacks and the escape pipes, cut some of the guy-chains staying the smoke stacks, smashed skylights all to flinders, &c., &c. I shall never forget how Pilot Ely and I discussed our chances while under fire, in case a shell should strike the boiler-iron lining of the pilot house. He

laughingly said to me: "If a shell hits that, I will meet you over on the sand bar to the starboard."

Having successfully passed the battery and landed above, I first visited the tinclad, and found she had been severely handled in her fight the evening before, and the captain was himself wounded in the head. I next visited the captain of the transport, and found him heavily loaded with freight and passengers, but ready and eager to run the battery with us. I arranged with Colonel Ellet this time myself to lead the convoy, while he followed closely in my wake, and we were to give the Rebs, "the best we had in the shop" as we went down, as we did also in going up, with both artillery and muskets. In going down I determined to have the first shot, and took my stand behind the Rodman gun on the starboard, near the front end of the cabin deck. We pushed on down, the rebel guns and gunners were in plain sight on shore, the men with coats off and bare-headed. My men grew more and more impatient to fire, and finally I gave the word, and training the piece the men let her go. At almost the same instant the enemy opened, and their first shot struck and shattered the aft front corner of our gun platform, throwing the splinters all over the gun crew and myself, but doing no material damage. From this time, so long as we were within range of the battery, we heard music. The shells tore through the oaken barricades, and went crashing through the cabin, ranging aft and passing through the thin stateroom partitions as though they were egg shells. The chandeliers and the glass in the skylights jingled. The roar of our three pieces of artillery and those on the ram close behind, together with the quickly repeated volleys of musketry, were deafening.

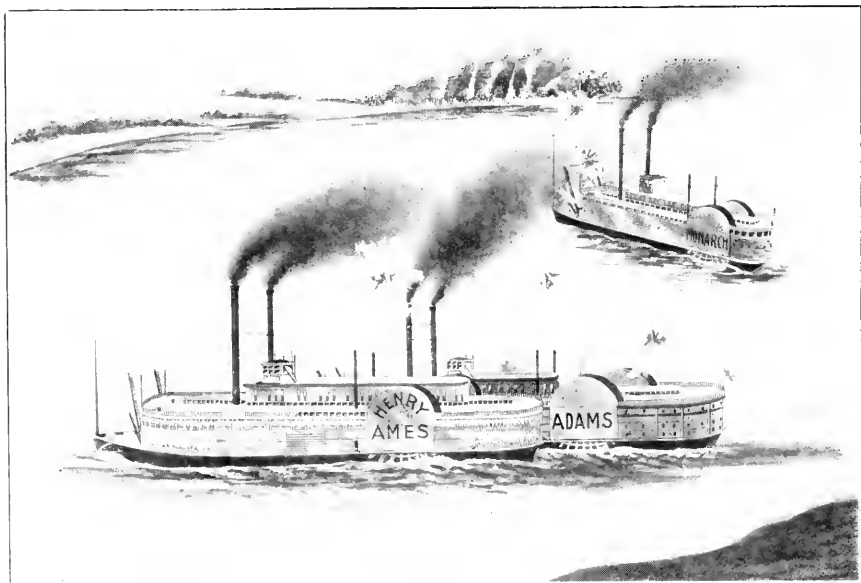
As soon as we were out of range of the rebel guns I walked aft, and a little way from where I had been standing, lay Dennis Murphy, a gallant Irishman belonging to Co. K. While firing through a loop-hole in the barricade a shell had torn off his lower jaw and his right shoulder. He was dead. Just beyond him lay Corporal Joseph Field, one of my own best men. He had been firing with his left side against the barricade, when a shell struck him in the abdomen, cutting away the outer covering and letting his bowels and liver out upon the deck. When I came to him, he was supporting his head on his hand, and his horrified comrades were about him. I stooped down and took his head in my hands, and turning his eyes upon my face with a look that has never been forgotten, he said: "Captain, can anything be done for me?" I replied: "No, Field, you will be dead in a few minutes. Have you any message for your friends?" "Tell them I die willingly for my country," said he. I ordered a mattress thrown from the nearest stateroom upon deck, scooped his warm, bloody entrails up in my hands and laid them back upon him. We lifted and laid him upon the mattress and he was dead.

Passing through the midship gangway of the cabin to the larboard side, I found another man, Charles H. Hallowell of Co. G, whose right arm a shell had taken off close to the shoulder. He lay with his head toward me, on the

table, and as I approached, he reached back his left hand to me saying: "Captain, I was doing my duty when this was done."

Upon the hurricane deck on the larboard side, we found another of my own men, James Mason. A shell had passed through his chest, tearing out his heart in its passage, and throwing it clear across upon the hurricane deck of the boat we were convoying past the battery. Mason had especially endeared himself to his officers and comrades by his generous and unselfish attention to others in sickness.

Suck was the fight at Columbia Bend, short but sharp. When we passed up, only a part of the enemy's guns were in use, their battery having been



Fighting Marmaduke's Battery at Columbia Bend. The Adams Convoying the Passenger Steamer Henry Ames and Firing Her Bow Guns, While the Monarch Halts to Engage the Enemy.

divided and some of the guns being in the bend below. But when we returned the whole ten played upon us, having been brought across the point for that purpose.

During the engagement my whole command fought gallantly. Brave, Lieut. Guildemeister was never cooler or more effective. Captain Havenswell, who ever expected anything of him but bull dog pluck? My sailing master, Thomas Drillet, stood through it all, right out upon the hurricane deck, and Pilot Ely proved himself a brave fellow at the wheel.

During this engagement the ADAMS was struck by solid shot and shell thirty-six times, being completely riddled from stem to

stern, and with decks slippery with human gore, was a shocking sight to behold.

Soon after the war Chief Sutler Huggins, who was on the ADAMS that day, was at Vicksburg and met and talked with the officers who commanded the battery attacking the boats. He said the fire from the ADAMS, both going up and coming back, was a galling and destructive one, and that they lost several killed and wounded by the shots of the MOXARCH and ADAMS, and thought their action in taking transports by their batteries a bold and impudent defiance he had never seen equaled.

It is a fact of historic interest that the wife of General McClelland (then lying sick at New Orleans) was a passenger on the AMES, going to the General's bedside.

That evening it was found that so serious were the injuries to the BALDIC that she must be relieved and sent up for repairs, and orders were accordingly issued, and she was started that night for St. Louis. The MOXARCH accompanied her past Columbia Bend. They were fired on by the rebel battery but neither received any injury. The MOXARCH then returned to the fleet, again passing the battery.

During the day a brave soldier from the ADAMS, Samuel D. Nelson, of Co. F, died on board the DIANA. Left alone during a time of excitement he met the sick soldier's fate, with no one to hear his dying words.

As all were aware, the service in which the Brigade was now engaged was not its legitimate work. This convoying was the special work of the gunboats. That the navy was slow in getting round to the doing of it, gave no sufficient warrant for the Brigade to undertake it. The Marine boats, mere wooden shells, were never intended to stand off and contend with land batteries. They lacked the weight and reinforcement necessary to enable them to stand the recoil of the heavy guns placed upon them, and by which both the DIANA and the BALDIC were already badly strained. Besides, these vessels were occupied by men, willing indeed, and even eager to encounter danger, and capable, as any equal number of men with like equipment, to inflict punishment upon the enemy, but in their crowded condition upon the boats, they were like fowls shut up in a coop, destined for slaughter. Moreover the improvised gun-squads, made

necessary by the hasty placing of artillery on the decks of these vessels, were a menace to themselves and their comrades, as well as to the enemy. This was shown upon the *Baltic* when Perriman's arm was sacrificed through a premature explosion. All these considerations led General Ellet to conclude that he had "played gun-boat" long enough with vessels filled with soldiers, and was considering what course to take, when orders reached the command solving the problem, and giving promise of operations in which he could most heartily co-operate. The orders were from General Canby, the new commander at Vicksburg, and seem to imply that that officer thought that General Ellet was still absent from the Brigade:

Vicksburg, Miss., May 31, 1864.

Maj. Gen. A. J. Smith:—

* * * Your own command, reinforced by a regiment of cavalry from the forces under command of Major General Slocum, and whatever force of the Marine Brigade may be within reach, will be employed by you for the purpose of destroying or capturing the rebel force, or at least giving them such a lesson as will deter them from a removal of similar attempts. The most reliable information as to the character of the country in which you will operate, and the routes by which the rebels reach and retreat, may be obtained from officers of the Marine Brigade, and Col. Currie now on the *Diana* is recommended to you as specially qualified for this purpose.

E. R. S. CANBY,

Com'dg Mil. Div. West Miss.

Vicksburg, Miss., May 31, 1864.

Lieut. Col. Geo. E. Currie, Steamer Diana, Mississippi River:—

Sir:—The Major General Commanding directs me to inform you that Maj. Gen. A. J. Smith is about to proceed with his command to operate against the rebel forces at or near Greenville, and that he has recommended you to General Smith, as a proper person to communicate information necessary for that purpose. Please be in the way so that he can find you. * * *

GEO. I. MELVILLE,

1st Lieut. and Act. A. A. G.

Orders were accordingly issued, on the afternoon of the 2nd, for preparation to be made for going down stream, and at 2 o'clock a. m., of the 3rd, the *AUTOCRAT*, *DIANA*, *ADAMS* and *MONARCH*, accompanied by the transport *Henry Ames*, started for Vicksburg. The

battery at Leland was passed without any attack, and the fleet landed at Skipwith's, and remained there several hours. At 8 o'clock a. m. of the 3rd, the downward run was resumed.

At Goodrich's Landing a stop of an hour or so was made, during which time the ADAMS' companies buried their dead, with the usual military honors. At the head of each dead hero's grave was placed a board, upon which was painted his name, company and regiment.

Dispatches were brought up to Colonel Ellet, while at Goodrich's, by the tug DALLINGTON, and the boats resuming their course, reached Vicksburg at half past five o'clock p. m. Here the wharf was found lined with transports, and the RAINE and FAIRCHILD were there, awaiting the rest of the fleet.

It will be remembered that on the 25th of April, when the DIANA and ADAMS left Vicksburg with instructions to find the BALTIMORE above, and cruise in the vicinity of Greenville, the RAINE went below, and was to be soon followed by the FAIRCHILD. We shall now record the doings of these two boats, under command of Major J. R. Crandall, while the others were so actively engaged above. At 3 o'clock p. m. of April 25th, 1864, the RAINE left Vicksburg and heading down stream, landed and remained all night at New Carthage. During the forenoon of the 26th she ran down to Ashwood, La., where she spent the night. The next morning she ran down and landed at Grand Gulf, from which point her two companies of cavalry went out, driving the enemy's pickets across Bayou Pierre. It was ascertained that the enemy had two battalions of cavalry at Port Gibson, and therefore it was thought unsafe to cross the bayou in the face of such superior numbers, and the Marines returned to their boats. On the 28th, leaving Grand Gulf, the RAINE ran down to St. Joseph, La., and at 11 o'clock her two companies went out on a foraging expedition to Watson's plantation, to secure corn for the horses. From St. Joseph, on the morning of the 29th, the boat dropped down to Rodney, where she was joined by the FAIRCHILD. From this point the four companies went out, and drove in the pickets of Stockdale's cavalry. April 30th the companies on the two boats were mustered for pay. In the evening the enemy made their appearance in considerable numbers, and were shelled by the FAIRCHILD's guns. Major Crandall at this time changed his quarters to the FAIRCHILD.

On the morning of May 1st, Sergeant Ellis with Charles F. Russell, both of Co. D Cav., went up into town, and the Confederates, charging in, took them prisoners. Captain DeCoster took his company and went to the rescue, but the enemy retired in hot haste, taking their prisoners with them.

On the 2nd the battalion started on a scout of about forty miles from St. Joseph. On the 3rd, as the two boats were about starting for Vicksburg, whither they had been ordered, the *RAINE* broke her wheel on a log. It was not repaired until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and then the start up stream was again made, and Vicksburg was reached in the morning of the 4th. These boats had been ordered there, for the purpose of going up the Yazoo river to co-operate with General McArthur's land force, moving upon Yazoo City. Four of the Marine boats, *BALRIC*, *FANRENN* and two rams, were detailed for the trip, and after taking on board two companies of negro troops, proceeded to Sartatia, while the *AUTOCRAT* went only as far as Lake Landing, about ten miles below Haines' Bluff. The boats left Vicksburg at 11 o'clock a. m. of the 5th, landed and tied up for the night at Sartatia, thirty miles below Yazoo City.

General McArthur's A. D. C. came in and reported his command four miles distant. The boats left Sartatia on the 6th at daylight, and reached Liverpool Heights at 6 o'clock. Here companies C and D Cav., from the *RAINE*, went out to reconnoitre, but met with no encounter with the enemy, though many of them were seen at a distance along the bluffs. In the afternoon General McArthur's A. D. C. came in again, and the battalion went out eight miles to his force. Co. A Cavalry was left to act as rear picket to McArthur's army. The *AUTOCRAT* went to Vicksburg, and then returned again to her former position. On the 7th companies B and D Cav. went out, and when within six miles of Yazoo City, the advance, commanded by Captain DeCoster, surrounded a house and captured two Confederate soldiers with their horses, arms and equipments, and burned a considerable quantity of corn. At 1 o'clock p. m. of the 8th, the boats proceeded to Yazoo City, and Co. D Cav. dashed ashore, out through the deserted streets, and picketed the roads for the night. On the 12th Co. D and parts of companies B and C Cav., went on a scout, four miles on the upper river road. On the way a woman was overtaken

riding a mule. She was bidden to halt, but no halt for her. A second time she was ordered to halt, but she paid no attention. The officer in command of the advance spurred forward, flanked and fronted the rider and mule, and brought them to a stop. For a time the woman made no answer to questions fired at her, but finally denied all knowledge respecting the presence or location of the enemy, and was permitted to go on her way. Not half a mile from that place, the battalion was fired on from the rear, and bullets came thick and fast, and the column quickly dismounted and deployed. About that time one of the men known as "Dutch George," came in on the dead run, pursued by a Confederate, firing on him with a revolver. The Marines opened fire on the pursuer, and he fell from his horse. The enemy, checked in their rush by the carbine fire from the Marines, halted, dismounted, and charged with a yell. Lieutenant Doane, who in the meantime sent two men to ascertain the position of the enemy, and the exact lay of the land, then gave the order to mount, and went dashing through a gap made in a fence, out into an open cotton field, clear around the Confederates and their well-planned ambushade. Fierce firing and a hot pursuit ensued, as the enemy tried to head off the Marines from reaching the main road, but through fields, over fences and ditches the Marine cavalry went, until they finally won out in the race, and came under protection of the guns of the fleet. This proved that the Marines could run when they had to, which was seldom. No one was seriously hurt on the Marine side, during this melee, the only casualties being one man slightly wounded, and one horse shot in the leg.

On the 13th, a tug came up with dispatches for General McArthur, and the battalion went out to find him, and deliver them. Comrade J. H. Stevens, of Co. A Cav., gives a modest account of the day's occurrences, which we copy, as the story of

HOW THE CAVALRY FOUND WIRT ADAMS' CAMP.

On the 13th we started out with the four companies of cavalry, Major Crandall in command, to take dispatches to General McArthur, who was supposed to be at Benton, ten miles east of Yazoo City, and who had been engaged in a running fight with Wirt Adams' command. When we arrived at Benton, we found both forces had moved further east, and we pushed on to overtake them. On every hand we could see evidences of skirmishes and heavy fighting,

and it was plainly evident that McArthur had the Johnnies on the run. But no sign of McArthur's forces could be found. About 10 o'clock that night we came in sight of camp fires, about ten miles east of Benton. Cheered by the sight of camp fires, and the prospect of coffee, we pushed on until, when near the camp, we were halted by the pickets with the challenge, "Who comes there?" On being answered, "The Marine Brigade," the pickets opened fire with a volley or two and then ran. Major Crandall, thinking they had misunderstood the answer, ordered the battalion to advance, which we did at a brisk trot, and swinging round a point of timber, we found ourselves in the midst of Wirt Adams' camp. His command was if anything more surprised than we were. We promptly responded to the command "Right about," and moved back at a lively pace, closely followed by the Confederate cavalry until we got back to Yazoo City, having covered about forty miles without dismounting.

In the evening of the 14th the ram *Switzerland* came up, and landed at the city. Her arrival was accounted timely, since in case of attack she could render valuable assistance, being able to move with her guns from point to point as needed.

On the 15th General McArthur with his force came in to Yazoo City about noon, closely followed by Wirt Adams' command. A striking picture of the destitution prevailing among the inhabitants of the town is found in a letter of this date written by Captain Crandall, of the General's staff, who said: "I could tell a strange tale of 'the destitution and privation among the people here. They rush 'around like mad, and try all kinds of schemes with the commissaries 'and sutlers. The great cry is 'flour—flour! Only let us have flour.' 'Women beg, urge, plead, and it has been my duty to listen to these 'appeals and decide what must be done.'"

Toward evening on the 16th, a report was circulated that two men, of the 11th Ill. Vols., had been found hanging to a tree. The citizens had previously shown the meanest and bitterest spirit, frequently insulting the Union soldiers, without provocation. The men garrisoning the city had become greatly irritated over this conduct, and when the word respecting the hanging of the two men went round, there was an explosion of their pent-up wrath. First the Court House, and then other buildings were fired, and only the prompt posting of a strong provost guard, prevented the total destruction of the place at this time. Comrade A. C. Byerly, of D Cav., gives a graphic account of what occurred on the night of the 17th, which

we here copy: "I was on patrol duty that day. About 10 o'clock p. m., I ordered three of McArthur's men, coming up street from out of an alley, to halt—my orders being to arrest and send to Headquarters all men so found. They refused to go, disappearing down another alley. Half an hour after, I discovered smoke issuing from the rear of a building on the alley. I dashed up, to find the building a mass of flames. The alarm was given and the citizens ran out a little hand fire-engine, and some of the soldiers helped to work it. Other soldiers mingling with the crowd, cut holes in the hose with their pocket knives. The fire spread to the other side of the street, and burned fiercely, getting entirely beyond control. The crowd worked to save the contents of the buildings and many of the soldiers helped them. Almost all the store buildings on the principal street burned during the night."

Early on the morning of the 18th, preparations were begun for a return of all the troops to Vicksburg. The boats received on board the wagons, camp equipage, etc., not required by the land forces during their march, and the Marine cavalry went by land, being assigned the advance of McArthur's entire force. During the day this advance skirmished continually with the enemy, who, however, made no stand. The force reached and camped that night at Liverpool Heights. The march was resumed at 4 o'clock a. m. of the 19th, the Marine cavalry being made rear guard, during this day, and having several spirited brushes with the enemy. Reaching Sartatia about 10 o'clock a. m., the command went into camp, for the night. Next morning, taking the Marine cavalry for an escort, General McArthur pushed forward to Vicksburg, reaching there about the middle of the afternoon. This terminated what was palpably an unsuccessful expedition, though the General commanding claimed otherwise. One thing is certain—the Marines performed their part creditably. In his report General McArthur said: "I desire to call attention to Brigadier General Ellet, commanding the Marine Brigade, for his kindness and assistance in doing everything he could to make the expedition successful."

Late in the day (22nd) the RAINE and FAIRCHILD passed down stream, and morning dawned upon them at Ashton, Louisiana. A company of negro infantry, and one company of the First Mississippi

Mounted Riflemen were stationed here. In the afternoon a scout of eight miles was made, without encountering the enemy. On the 24th a scout of thirty miles was made, ending at St. Joseph below, whither the boats went to meet the men. On this scout the battalion was compelled to construct two bridges, in crossing one of which, several horses fell into the water. On this trip three horses were captured. The *RAINE* returned to Ashton, and the *FAIRCHILD* remained at St. Joseph.

On the 25th, the *FAIRCHILD* went down to Rodney, and on the 26th, to Waterproof. On the 27th she returned to St. Joseph, and a scout was made, and then she went on up to Ashton.

The companies on the *RAINE* rested on the 25th, and on the 26th made a scout of sixteen miles, seeing no Confederates, and returning to the boats about noon. On the 27th, the *RAINE*'s companies went on to the island inside Bruin's Lake, and secured some beef cattle. During the day it was learned that the rebel, Colonel Harrison, with one thousand men, had crossed to the east side of Bayou Mason.

On the 28th the *AUTOCRAT* came down, and issued rations to the boats.

On the 29th orders were received for the *RAINE* and *BALTIC* to return to Vicksburg, which was reached at 8 o'clock in the evening, where they were shortly afterward joined by the other boats, as before related.

The forenoon of the 30th was spent by the two boats at Vicksburg, coaling. In the afternoon colored troops were taken on board for Milliken's Bend, where they were put ashore during the night. At 5 o'clock p. m. of the 31st, the two boats received orders to proceed up as far as Goodrich's Landing, which was reached about midnight. Finding everything quiet at this place the return trip to Vicksburg was begun at 2 p. m. of the 1st, and the city was reached at 5 o'clock in the evening of the same day.



CHAPTER VIII

June-July, - 1864

Marines With Smith's Expedition vs. Marmaduke, Battle on Lake Chicot, Currie's Criticism.—Marine Raid to Indian Bayou, Stopping a Country Dance.—Exchange of Prisoners.—Sketch of the Marine Signal Corps.—Expedition to Coleman's Plantation and Driven Battle of July 4.—Whole Brigade With Slocum vs. Wirt Adams.—Seven days of March and Skirmish.—Enemy follow to River and Meet Severe Repulse. Marines in Camp at Omega Landing While Boats Are Used as Transports. Adams and Fairchild Returning Shelled by Guerrillas.—Another Collision.

As already related, plans were now matured for an expedition in force, under Gen. A. J. Smith, to clear the country above on the Louisiana side, of the enemy operating under Marmaduke, in guerilla attacks along the river. All was in readiness for the move, and the portion of the Marine force to co-operate was placed under the command of Colonel Currie.

On June 4, 1864, with some of General Smith's cavalry on board, and with the rest of his command on some twenty transports following, the Marine boats DIANA, RAINE, ADAMS and FAIRCHILD left the wharf at Vicksburg and led the way up the Mississippi. Marmaduke was now in the vicinity of Lake Village. This little hamlet of about one hundred population, and the county seat of Chicot county, Ark., was situated on the west side of a horse-shoe shaped lake, which had at one time been a bend in the river. Colonel Currie, since deceased, left a very full account of this expedition, and the engagement with which it terminated, which furnishes the interesting details, and is here quoted:

THE MARINES IN THE SMITH EXPEDITION AGAINST MARMADUKE.

By request of General Smith I reported to him at midnight of June 3, 1864, and the following plan of operations was agreed upon: With his army of ten thousand infantry, artillery and cavalry we would return in the morning to Sunnyside Landing, disembark the troops and offer battle. My headquarters boat, the *Diana*, leading the fleet of twenty-six vessels, would make me arrive first. I would then disembark the mounted command consisting of the Marine Brigade and two squadrons 4th Iowa Cavalry, and with one twelve-pounder mountain howitzer making a reconnoissance, locate the enemy, but not bring on the fight.

At 5 o'clock on the afternoon of June 4th the *Diana* reached Sunnyside and as soon as the line was formed, we rode in the direction of Lake Village. A mile out we encountered the enemy's pickets, advantageously posted, at the far end of a bridge over a small bayou. They tried to prevent our crossing. Pushing them, they gave way, scampered across an open field and took shelter in a skirt of timber. To dislodge them from so protected a position, I dismounted the command, which advanced as infantry, while Capt. J. P. Harper with Co. H made a flank movement to our left and the howitzer was placed on the right at the foot of the lake, in enfilade the rebel line. As soon as Captain Harper was in position our whole line advanced, the howitzer hurled shot and shell, the rebels fell back under the galling fire of the Marines, and we soon occupied as sheltered a position in the timber as they. With impetuous valor our men drove them out of the woods into an open field beyond, bordering the lake but separated from it by a high levee, thrown up for protection against overflow. A few of us rode out to look over the situation, but had not proceeded over 200 yards when a shower of bullets came over the brow of the levee. With an order to dismount and charge up the levee, I hastened back to bring up the command. A hissing rain of bullets fell all around me as the rebel sharpshooters tried to secure good aim. My horse, as if pursued by Tam O'Shanter's witches, flew over the ground, but more fortunate than poor Meg, escaped. The handful of men succeeded in holding the guerrillas at bay until reinforced. Though fighting at such short range we escaped with only four wounded. It was now sunset. Hearing the approach of artillery on our left, and having accomplished the design of the reconnoissance, to locate the enemy for the battle next day, we returned to the boats. The plans of operation for the next day were that the Marine Brigade should start in advance, meet the enemy, bring on the battle, and engage it until General Smith's command arrived.

At daylight June 5th, the Marine Brigade had already encountered the rebels and fought over the same ground as the evening before. The rebels kept falling back with a show of fight until they had reached a chosen position. By 8 o'clock the two lines were confronting each other and the battle was on in earnest. A drenching rain from early morning made the country roads almost impassable, seriously retarding the progress of General Smith's com-

mand coming to our assistance, so that for over an hour the Marine Brigade was contending against great odds. The rebel line was formed on the north side of a cotton field, in a skirt of small timber, thick with weeds and underbrush, their left resting at the base of the levee extending westwardly. Our line formed parallel and as we advanced, Co. A, Capt. I. D. Newell, deployed as skirmishers. This line at once became engaged with the enemy at short range, and the firing was so severe the men laid down in the weeds and grass for want of better protection. Our position was now perilous. Supposing General Smith to be in supporting distance, according to the plan agreed upon, I had advanced as far as possible with my little command. We could do nothing but show fight and wait; any attempt to withdraw would bring on us an instant charge and capture. Captain Newell bravely held his advanced position. When he sent word it was untenable, I encouraged him with the assurance that the infantry was near. After fully an hour of weary waiting General Smith arrived. Seeing the location of the skirmishers, he ordered General Mower's brigade and a four-gun battery to file over the levee, take position in front and so relieve Captain Newell, whose company fell back to our main line. General Mower opened the battle with his battery of four guns, supported by his brigade of infantry. At the first discharge of his artillery came a reply from a masked battery of the enemy not a 100 yards from his front, and so near had it the range of our guns, that General Mower was compelled to withdraw his battery after the second shot. The infantry now moved forward, and the rebels fell back a mile or so towards Lake Village, through an open field and then across a bayou into a dense woods. In this woods a new enemy appeared. It became apparent that the Marine Brigade had been contending with only a portion of the rebel force. Their advance was to meet us, fall back when pressed, and draw us on to this bayou to receive the fire of the main army, securely sheltered in the woods on the opposite bank. Ditch, or Fish Bayou was a sluggish stream four or five miles long, impassable to infantry, but their advance had retired across it by means of a bridge, which they now destroyed.

When plans for this fight were made I gave General Smith some idea of this guerrilla fighting and suggested Capt. C. G. Fisher of Co. E, to act as his special aid, who was thoroughly posted on the topography of the country and the guerrilla strategies, and he strenuously advised against advancing the infantry to the bayou, as it was impassable, and no protection against a concealed and sheltered foe, save here and there a fence or underbrush and weeds. But the General thought he knew best, and a line of infantry, a mile at least in length, was hurried to the stream, to receive volley after volley from the rebels on the opposite bank, sheltered by the woods as securely as though they were out of range of our shot and shell. Not a man flinched, though every man knew "some one had blundered." Our brave soldiers advanced to as certain death as though "cannons to the right of them, cannons to the left of them, cannons in front, volleyed and thundered." How they fell. In less than a

half hour 100 dead and wounded men were lying in an old cotton gin, about a half mile to the rear, which had been converted into a hospital.

General Smith now ordered the Marine Brigade, which during this part of the fight was guarding the left flank of his army, to ford the bayou and attack the rebels, then retreating. The stream was not so deep, but a thick muck at the bottom gave the horses no footing and they had to flounder over as best they could. As soon as a few of us reached the bank we galloped off, others joining us on the way. We saw not a foe. A few minutes' ride brought us to a negative creature who seemed to be in charge of a hospital; also negative as to killed, wounded or sick. Beyond this the road forked and the rebels had gone by both branches, as the tracks showed. An orderly from General Smith directed me to take the one leading to Lake Village, and there we encamped for the night. The rain had continued all day and our men, thoroughly drenched, took everything available and made fires. What a change from the morning. Out on the battlefield the brave boys had been buried where they fell, and the wounded were being cared for as best we could. The rainfall continued and the night was dark and dreary. Eight o'clock next morning found us on our way to the boats, lying off Luna and Columbia Landings—the Marine Brigade at the former, and General Smith's fleet at the latter point, three miles above.

A little incident will show how the guerrillas watched our movements. About noon I rode up the river bank to General Smith's headquarters accompanied by my orderly, John Brock. After an hour's chat, I sent my horse back with the orderly, and returned, myself, on a small tug. I watched them go down the bank with no thought of danger. The orderly rode in full view of both fleets and 10,000 soldiers, and yet at a branch in the road he was pounced upon by some guerrillas and captured. Our men saw the capture, but supposed he was joined by some of our troops. A prisoner afterwards captured, who was one of the party, gave full particulars of this most daring exploit. General Marmaduke took my horse for his own use, and was very proud of him, as he well might be.

The battle of Lake Village was no victory. Although the field was won, it was a field dotted with the graves of our soldiers and reddened with the blood of our wounded. The rebels left no dead or wounded. They shot at a mark, and when fired of the play, rode away. The Marine Brigade accomplished the only part of the fight that was creditable. For two days they contended with a vastly larger force, held it in check and only quitted the front when the infantry in large numbers arrived. With the number at the command of General Smith we could have enveloped the enemy entirely and captured him, but he erred in judgment from the start and the battle was lost. The plan of attack should have been to move upon the enemy in two divisions, one by way of Sunnyside, the other from Luna, thus closing every avenue of escape. The guerrillas fought only when concealed. Theirs was the practice to shoot and escape. They were hungry wolves that dogged our footsteps, biting under

cover of darkness and fleeing when the morning light would discover them. Had their plan of battle been met by a little strategy, and the advice taken not to rush the army up the bank of the bayou, and the suggestions to attack the enemy front and rear met with favor, the result would have been different.

Colonel Currie's well known tactical skill, his dauntless courage and his thorough knowledge of the country, and the habits of the enemy in that field, entitle his opinions to weight, in his criticism of this Lake Village affair, but it can hardly be justly claimed that "the Marine Brigade accomplished the only part in the fight that was creditable." This would detract from what the Colonel himself beautifully and generously accords the men who so gallantly charged the bayou, and fell before the enemy's fire. His criticism of the charge, made, as he says, contrary to the advice of Captain Fisher, is doubtless just. But it may be questioned whether any one in authority was responsible for it. Our authors remember well to have heard it stated at the time, that an Irish brigade, irritated beyond control by the enemy's galling fire, broke away from their officers, and deaf to all commands and regardless of earnest entreaties, made the mad rush to the bayou, in hope of capturing the battery, which indeed they came very near doing—driving the gunners from their pieces, and silencing the battery for a time. But their inability to cross the bayou prevented their securing the prize which their valor fairly won. Colonel Currie also points out what he considered a defect in the plan of battle, but it is to be observed that he does not claim that in his previous midnight conference with General Smith any different plan had been suggested by him. Nor can we agree with Colonel Currie that "The battle at Lake Village was no victory." It was a victory. The enemy was driven from the field, and so severely punished that he seems to have completely forgotten his boasted purpose of destroying the Marine Brigade, and of blockading the river, for he never returned to trouble either again. So we charitably take into consideration Colonel Currie's sore disappointment over the outcome of the fight. For days just previous, with mere shells of wooden boats, he had battled against Marmaduke's batteries, and he had hoped to see the enemy captured or seriously crippled in this engagement, and when the wily Confederate chieftain slipped safely away, with all his artillery, Colonel Currie was bitterly disappointed.

Considering the active part it played in this fight the Brigade was exceedingly fortunate. We find no record of any killed, and only one man, Sergeant Snell, was seriously wounded. Lake Village was left in rather denuded condition, the men during their stay through the long, dreary, wet night, appropriating whatever they could find that ministered in any way to their comfort. The village of Columbia fared even worse, being completely consumed by fire, set by General Smith's men on their return.

At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 7th, the Marines marched in to the river at Luna Landing, where the boats lay at anchor, and went on board. General Smith's command re-embarked upon transports, and passed on up the river, under hurry orders from Memphis, due to Forrest's raid and the capture of Fort Pillow. During the day three Marines wandered too far from camp, and were taken prisoners. In the evening the *Aurocray* and *Moxarch* came up from Vicksburg and joined the fleet, having been fired into with musketry at Greenville. A flag of truce came in during that afternoon, soliciting an exchange of prisoners, which for some reason was not effected.

On the 8th, all five boats dropped down to Greenville, and during the day several houses, including the court house, were set on fire and burned. During the day the *Moxarch* cruised between Luna and Sunnyside, but saw no enemy.

At an early hour in the morning of the following day (June 9) General Ellet with six companies of his mounted infantry and four of the cavalry and the howitzer, together with four companies of the Second Wisconsin cavalry, all provided with two days' rations, started on an expedition on the east side, whose destination was the Sunflower river, and whose object was the finding and capture or destruction of the *H. D. Mears*, a large steamer, reported to be secreted on that stream or some connecting bayou. Skirmishes with the enemy commenced soon after leaving the river, and continued all day. One Confederate soldier's horse fell on a bridge, and both horse and rider were captured. The command kept steadily on, crossed Deer Creek, passed through a great swamp, and came to Bogue Phaliah. This is one of the numerous and peculiar streams found in the south, and especially in this section of the country, generally rather narrow, but

deep, sluggish, and miry. A ferry was found on this stream, a small decked flat, without railing, manipulated by means of a rope, and capable of carrying a dozen or so horses and their riders at a time. With this ferry the command was crossed over to the other side, and after passing through a low, swampy canebrake, it went into camp on a large plantation, located on the hills some three or four miles beyond.

Here the men found plenty of feed for their horses, and an abundance of chickens, hams, bacon, meal, for themselves, in appropriating which they were by no means backward. No Federal soldiers had



Diagram of Lake Chicot, Greenville and Vicinity, Showing Route of Marine Raid to Indian Bayou, for the Destruction of Hidden Steamers.

before been seen in this locality. Just after crossing the main command over the bayou, Uriah Perry of Co. E, Inf., was sent to the rear of the column on some errand, and getting off the road was captured.

During the night a rather unusual and somewhat amusing incident occurred. Captain Newell's account of it published some years since, in the "Historian," we insert here as our own:

A NIGHT RAID STOPS A DANCE.

I was called to the General's tent, about midnight, and found the General cross-questioning a grinning darkey, who had been brought in from the picket line. This darkey reported two lots of Confederate officers, some four miles

away, in two different houses. In the first house, he said, there were only four or five officers fast asleep, while in the second house there were some 12 or 15, having a dance, with the house full of southern ladies. The General said: "Captain, we want those fellows. You will take your company, or so much of it as you deem necessary, and go after them. Your force will go on foot, taking only one horseman in case you get into trouble and want reinforcements in haste. You will take this darkey with you as a guide, and if you are ambushed or led into any trap, be sure and kill him the first thing you do. Make your capture quietly, and if possible without firing a gun. We are in a strange country, and I don't know what may be in here. If you succeed, throw out pickets, and stay there until daylight, and then come in."

It was one of the darkest nights I ever saw, or seemed so to me. Much of the road lay through, or along, the edge of a heavy piece of timber. I sent Lieutenant Guildemeister with six men as advance guard, with the darkey as guide, and between this advance and the company I intervened another small squad. The first house, as I learned from the darkey, was just beyond a bridge, and surrounded by a high rail fence. Accordingly I told Lieutenant Guildemeister to go to the bridge, and there wait until I came up with the company. Reaching the bridge, I gave instructions to the men to cross over it in perfect silence, and then line up along the fence, and when I gave a certain signal all, without regard to any particular order, were to go over the fence and surround the house as quickly as possible, permitting no one to escape. With the house surrounded I went to the front door, knocked and demanded admittance. The door was not opened, and no response to my demand was made, but I heard a shuffling that sounded very much like men getting hold of their sabres and pistols, so I kicked the door open, and lo, and behold! here were five rebel officers fixing for fight. I ordered them to throw down their arms, and told them my men were all round the house, and they surrendered.

It was a mile or more to the next house, where the dance was going on. Putting the captured men in the rear under guard, we went on. It was a hot summer night. The house, brilliantly illuminated, was filled with men and women, and the windows all up. The dance had ceased for a time, because the fiddler had broken one of his strings (made of silk because catgut could not be obtained) and was repairing it. We tarried just a minute to take in the scene, and then, at the signal, the men went pell mell over the fence and around the house. The rebel officers within heard us coming, and rushed to the hall, where they had stacked their arms. I ran up to the door and cried out: "My men are all around this house; think of your women. If you fire a shot you take the responsibility. Lay down your arms and retire from the hall!" One of the rebels said: "Boys, I guess we are in for it." I ordered in a guard and took possession of the arms. As I remember it was thirteen men with their horses and arms captured here, making eighteen in all. I asked the darkey, who guided us, how he knew that we were in the neighborhood.

while the white people seemed not to know anything of our presence, and he said, "Wy Marster, I knowed when you uns crossed de fust hosses ovah de bayou." "Well," I asked, "but how did you know?" "Wall I des got er 'spatch ovah de grapevine telergraf." "Well," I said again, "How many of the darkeys round here knew we were coming?" And he replied, "Wy all de darkeys in de country know it." They had closely kept the secret of our advance.

Three companies were left at the Bogue, to guard the ferry, and the next morning about ten o'clock the Confederates came up, and fired across the bayou upon them, but a round or two from the howitzer dispersed them. Leaving a portion of the command here, General Ellet proceeded to the Sunflower, and thence on to Indian Bayou, found the steamer *Mear* hidden there and burned her. Stores in two different places, containing considerable stocks of goods, were also destroyed. Quite a good many horses and mules were confiscated on this trip, some of which were found hidden out in the woods and canebrakes, their whereabouts being revealed to us by the darkies.

While the General and his command were absent on their errand, that portion of the command left behind improved the time in first collecting provisions, of which there was an abundance in the country, and then ferrying themselves back across the Bogue, that they might be ready for a start to the boats when the General returned, which he did about eleven o'clock a. m. of the 14th. The whole command now returned to the boats, without any happening of importance, but in the midst of a wearisome rain. The command was accompanied to the boats by quite a crowd of negroes of both sexes, and of all shades and conditions, making the journey on foot, but happy in the assurance of freedom under our protection. Twenty-two prisoners, and about one hundred fifty horses and mules were captured on this trip, together with large quantities of stores and provisions. The command was out three days, and rode about one hundred ten miles, and had three unimportant skirmishes.

That the Confederates feared a repetition of the Brigade's visit into this rich, isolated and comparatively undisturbed section, is evident from the following, from a report made to A. A. G. Ellis, by Perry Evans, commanding Confederate Scouts, and dated, Deer Creek, July 27, 1864: The extract reads: " . . . I would further report

that immediately after the raid of the Marine Brigade to Indian Bayou, which I had the honor to report some time since, I caused to be burned one hundred seventy-five bales of cotton, on Sunflower River, below Garvins Ferry, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy; a number of boats having come up as high on the river as Buck's Ferry, and carried away a considerable quantity of cotton, and it being expected that they would also take this. I burned the cotton, believing it to be the property of Robertson Topp, of Memphis."

Early on the morning of the 12th a flag of truce came in, asking an exchange of prisoners, and Uriah Perry, captured by the enemy the first day of the scout, was received and exchanged for one of their men in our hands. After the exchange was effected, it was learned from Perry that he had been robbed by his captors of \$25.00, and General Ellet caused him re-imburshed with an equal amount, taken from the prisoners still in our possession. At two o'clock in the afternoon the fleet left for Vicksburg, arriving there at eight o'clock the next morning. In the early morning of the following day (13th) Sergt. Snell of Co. A Cav. mentioned as wounded during the reconnoissance at Sunnyside, the evening before the Lake Village fight, died of his wound in the head, and was buried about ten o'clock of the same day. About this time news came that the wife of Lieut. B. F. Housel (who was then recruiting for a negro regiment) had died in Vicksburg, and a leave of absence was granted him to take her remains home.

On the 15th, Lieut. Philip Howell, of the General's staff, was sent out with a flag of truce, in the rear of Vicksburg, to arrange with General Wirt Adams for an exchange of prisoners. On the 16th the Moxarch was ordered to Sunnyside, to cruise in that vicinity. On the 17th the ADAMS was sent up Old River, near Vicksburg, looking for timbers with which to repair the damages sustained by the Diana from her collision with the Adams, some time before. On the 18th a disabled portion of the AUTOCRAT's engines was sent to New Orleans for repairs. A favorable response having been received from General Wirt Adams, to the proposal for exchange of prisoners, one man was sent in and exchanged by him. The ADAMS returned from Old River about dark. On the 21st the RAINE was sent up the Yazoo with a transport, in search of timber. On the 22nd, orders were received

relieving Lieutenants Warren and Bailey, signal officers, and assigning them to service in the Department of the Gulf. As this will be the last mention of these highly esteemed officers, who have served with the command from the early days of the ram fleet, we here give some account of the special service in which they were engaged.

We have made occasional mention of officers and men of the Signal Corps. This was a distinct branch of military service, which came to be recognized as a necessity in every part of the Army. Its duty was to put detached portions of a command in immediate communication, by means of a system of signaling, by the use of flags, and known as the "wig-wag" system. Colonel Ellet had adopted for his rams a short code of signals, mainly relying, however, on the use of the boat's whistles, for controlling their movements. A somewhat extended code was used for the Marine boats, by which orders to land, orders to leave a landing, to come alongside—calls for help—for men ashore to join their boat, etc., were in constant use. But, just before the Tennessee River expedition, the Signal Corps was brought to the western army, by Capt. O. F. Howard, and General Ellet, requested its use upon his boats. Lieut. W. F. Warren, of the ram fleet, was detached for this purpose and instructed in the code, and very soon had a detail of an officer and three or four men on each boat, equipped with the necessary paraphernalia, and trained to send and receive messages between the boats, at any distance at which the signals could be seen. At one time Lieutenant Warren had as assistants and representatives of the Corps, Lieuts. G. W. Bailey, and S. G. Searritt, with a number of enlisted men whose names cannot all be given, but among them were Lewis D. David, S. M. Coe, Thomas B. Kelly, J. Q. Adams and J. W. Whittlesey. All became proficient in signalling, and the three last mentioned were recommended for commissions, and assigned to duty, later, in the rank for which they had been named. But through some cause, never understood, none of these commissions were ever received. During the continuance of the Brigade, this corps rendered good service—being often commended by their chief. At times, as the exigencies of the service required, they were assigned to field duty, and later returned to the Brigade. Warren and Bailey, by the order relieving them from Brigade service, were now directed to join Banks, and

served through his disastrous campaign in Louisiana, and later on the Gulf coast, and were not again seen by their old comrades during the war.

Resuming our story of the Brigade, on June 23rd, the *RAINE* again went up the Yazoo, this time to convoy the transport *Cheek*, loaded with supplies. On the 24th the *LIONESS* left for Cairo, bearing dispatches from General Canby. During the night of the 26th a man of Co. C Inf. was stabbed in a disgraceful brawl, and died of his wounds.

On the 29th the *Moxaren* returned from her cruise in the vicinity of Sunnyside, and was ordered up, to cruise between Young's Point and Milliken's. It was reported that the Confederates had come in about Young's Point, and were burning buildings, capturing mules, dispersing the negroes, etc., and the companies on the *DIANA* made a scout beyond Young's Point, but discovered no enemy. One government lessee had been captured the day before, but had succeeded in making his escape. On the 30th the command was mustered for pay.

We have now to narrate some experiences of the Brigade, under somewhat novel conditions. Taking on board the 48th and 52nd La. (Negro) Inf., the fleet started down stream, July 2, 1864, and landed at Rodney, at two o'clock the next morning. About six o'clock the troops were ashore and moving. The entire force, except two companies left on the *BALTIMORE*, accompanied by the howitzer, took the road toward Oakland College.

Two or three versions of this expedition and the fight which occurred during the time the Brigade was out on it, written by those who participated, lie before the historian as he writes: These different accounts dovetail nicely into each other, showing that they are accurate in details. Any one of these several accounts would give a good description of the events as seen from the writer's stand-point only. But no one of these writers saw everything, and we therefore compile our account, from all of them.

Skirmishing with the enemy began about one mile out from Rodney, and continued all the forenoon. The day was hot, and on account of the unmounted negro troops, the march was necessarily slow. During the forenoon some five or six of the enemy's scouts were captured. Among the number were two, who must have belonged to a

signal corps, since they had a signal flag with them when taken. One of the Marine horses was wounded before noon. About noon the advance reached Coleman's Cross Roads—so-called because the roads from Port Gibson, Natchez, and Fayette converge, and cross each other here—and waited for the balance of the command to come up. About three o'clock General Ellet established his headquarters, and the entire command went into camp, after putting out a strong picket. The night was an uneasy one, for more or less firing was kept up on the picket line, and the report was that the enemy with whom the Natchez troops had had a tussle the day before, were in considerable force near Red Lick church, some miles distant. Our pickets, before daylight, killed two of the enemy, and wounded a third, as they were stealing up on our posts. As showing how the Marines scented the battle afar, A. C. Byerly, in his printed account, says: "We were astir (on the 4th) as soon as it was light, and while swallowing a hasty breakfast, I heard 'Posey' of Co. C Cav. remark to a comrade, 'This is the 4th of July, and I'll bet you a dollar we have plenty of 'fireworks'." After an early breakfast the mounted infantry moved out on the Port Gibson road, while the cavalry started out along the Fayette road, each seeking to locate the enemy. The negro regiments remained in camp. Each detachment had gone about three miles on its chosen road, when, just as the sun was rising, the cavalry came suddenly upon the enemy, who saluted their advance with a volley, and Charles Hubbard, of Co. B, fell dead. The company however did not falter, and charging headlong, carbines at rest, we were soon at their side, the battalion coming right and left into line." "Billy White was struck in the shoulder, and knocked from his horse. "The rebs were in the brush, and just how strong they were we could not tell. Major Crandall decided to send for reinforcements, and tasked Capt. De Coster for a messenger. Billie Corrie turned his horse out of ranks and said: 'I'll go—and after receiving his instructions, drew his revolver and galloped away, down the lonely road, in the direction of Headquarters."

The infantry had gone about three miles on their road, when they were overhauled by the messenger, and coming to a "right about" galloped at break-neck speed, back over the road they had come. In the meantime one of the negro regiments had gone to the support of

the cavalry, and when the Marine infantry, with the howitzer appeared upon the scene, the enemy quickly gave way. They were too stubborn, however, to give up the fight, and were slowly driven back some four miles, and then the Marine forces returned to Coleman's. The Marines had just fed their horses (which were still unbridled) and eaten dinner, when a rapid fire was heard on the picket line, in the direction of the recent fighting, indicating that the Confederates had followed the rear guard in, and was now crowding the negro picket line. The other negro regiment was sent to the front, and the howitzer went with them.

The firing now became quite brisk, sounding like the exchange between two lines of skirmishers, standing doggedly up to each other. General Ellet sent for Captain Newell and ordered him to take a few of his men and reconnoitre the line and report. Newell soon returned reporting that there was no strong force of the enemy in that direction, that the enemy was evidently making a feint there, and that the attack must be expected from the opposite quarter. Even while the captain was delivering this report, bodies of the enemy could be seen forming a line across the road between us and the river. The Marine line quickly "changed front to rear," and the infantry, dismounting, prepared to fight on foot. The enemy at once opened the ball. The Marine Cavalry was ordered to charge down the lane and break their line, and in executing this order, found themselves in a cut, and under a crossfire. They therefore dismounted and climbing over a high rail fence, were soon in a field of tall corn, squarely between the two lines, and out of sight of their own men. Not knowing that the cavalry was in their immediate front but supposing them still down along the road, the line formed on the hill, around the Coleman residence, opened on the Confederates right over the heads of the cavalry. The cavalry, sometimes lying flat on their faces for several minutes, to escape the double fire from friend and foe, kept up their own firing, as rapidly as possible while in their recumbent position. When there came a little lull in the Marine fusilade, they rose and slipped to the rear, getting into position on their own line. In the meantime the men left in charge of the "fours" retired down the road with the horses, and the animals were all saved.

In this melee "Spotty" Powell, of Co. D Cav., was wounded in the

leg, and Sam Mercer of Co. A Cav., was shot above the knee, and two other men were wounded, whose names are not found on record. The firing now gradually diminished, and one of the negro regiments, made a gallant charge on the left, with the cry: "Fort Pillow! Remember Fort Pillow."—No quarter!—No quarter! The enemy gave way, and the road toward the river was open, and again in our possession.

It was now about sunset, and it was evident that all the forces of the enemy in that immediate section of country were concentrating upon the Brigade. About this time two Marines brought in a prisoner who had on no uniform, but whose pockets were all full of cartridges, making it evident that what citizens there were left in that country were also swelling the ranks of the Confederates. Delay meant possible disaster, and the march was at once begun, in the direction of the river—some thirteen miles distant. The Marines were not, however, permitted to retire unmolested. The enemy hung upon the rear of the column, and in the darkness made several furious dashes, and in one instance well nigh captured the howitzer just as it was about to salute them with a double shotting of canister. At this time (says A. J. Pierce's diary) "Edward Hoffman, of Co. F Inf., who was one of the 'howitzer squad, was wounded in the foot, the same ball also wounding his horse in both fore legs. Something needed to be done to 'check these rushes of the enemy, and so, riding forward to the head of 'the column and turning a company of men on each side, General 'Ellet ordered the fence thrown down at each side of the road and 'placed the cavalry into these gaps. Then the column passed by, and 'as the Confederates came up, they were subjected to a murderous 'crossfire from both sides. When this had been played on them a few 'times the pursuers evidently came to feel that they had enough, and 'the retiring column pursued its way without further molestation."

Captain De Coster says in his diary that about seventy-five of the enemy were dismounted in these ambushades, at the rear of the column, and Lieutenant Howell of the General's staff, reported at the time that he saw not less than twenty of the enemy, unhorsed by a single volley. The Brigade's casualties were one man killed and fifteen wounded and missing. The loss of the negro regiments was thirty-two. Of their loss quite a number were captured as stragglers.

The negro regiments fought valiantly. On the way back to the river, many a horse "carried double"—a Marine trooper before, and a black infantryman behind.

The next day a party, under a flag of truce, went out to bury the Marine dead, and for the exchange of prisoners.

In the midst of the fight that day, Colonel Currie chanced to look up into the second story window of a house near which the line was formed, and saw Coleman's daughter, directing the enemy's movements, by signaling them with her handkerchief. Calling a couple of men from the firing line, he faced them toward the house, and in her hearing instructed them if she appeared before that window, or any other, during the continuance of the fight, to shoot her down. It is needless to add that she was not again visible, during the action.

A singular incident happened in this engagement. When the cavalry charged into the ent before mentioned, a cavalryman was hit in the forehead near the roots of his hair, with what must have been either a spent or glancing ball. It came, however, with sufficient force to break the outer bone and without cutting away the membrane lining of the skull. He fell from his horse, and his comrades supposed him dead, but when the battalion got back to the line, near Coleman's house, this man was there. How he reached there neither he nor any one else knew. The wound, strange to say, caused the loss of his voice, and he could not utter a word louder than a whisper. One day one of his comrades (Charlie Hallowell, who lost an arm at Columbia Bend) gave him a little jostle causing him pain, and he uttered a loud cry, and from that time recovered the use of his voice.

The enemy's loss in this engagement is not certainly known, but was reported at about one hundred and fifty. George Van Epps, of Co. A Cav., says: seventeen of them were killed in the last charge the Marines made upon them. From reports subsequently gathered, their loss must have largely exceeded the Brigade's loss, for the howitzer sent canister among them in generous contributions. The Marines took nine prisoners, and lost four horses. The enemy never fought the Brigade more furiously. They unquestionably hoped to stampede the negro regiments, thinking, if that could be done, then, with their superior numbers, they could overwhelm the Marines.

The 5th was spent at Rodney as people often spend the next day

after celebrating the 4th, in quietly resting, and waiting for their surplus patriotism to work off. During the day, however, the flag of truce was sent out to bury our dead, and arrange for an exchange of prisoners. This flag of truce found the enemy's pickets within a mile of the river. At night a strong picket was put out, and the men on the line were kept all night on the river, and firing was kept up a good deal of the time until morning. On the 6th, companies C and D Cav. went out on a reconnoissance, and found that the enemy had been reinforced with two brigades, and eight pieces of artillery. During the day a flag of truce came in from the enemy. Seven of the negro soldiers, who had become separated from their regiments in the fight at Coleman's, or on the night march to the boats, and had been in hiding in the woods, found their way in. Companies C and D, when they returned from their scout, drove in with them some fine beef cattle. At ten o'clock p. m. the pickets were called in, and the fleet moved up to Grand Gulf.

Early on the morning of the 7th, the command, with the two negro regiments, moved out on the Port Gibson road. At Bayou Pierre the enemy disputed the crossing, but after a spirited skirmish were driven away, and leaving the two negro regiments there to guard the crossing the Marine troops passed over and dashed into town, driving the enemy through the town, and some distance beyond.

In this engagement Randolph Gandry, of Co. B Cav., was mortally wounded, and for lack of an ambulance was left in the town. One of the enemy was killed and two were taken prisoners. Finding that the Confederates were not disposed to stand for a fight, the Brigade recrossed the bayou and returned to their boats. The fleet remained on the 8th all day at Grand Gulf, and at nine o'clock p. m., started for Vicksburg, where it arrived about noon the next day, and where the negro troops went ashore.

About this time the force, sent from Vicksburg out to Jackson, was on its way back and encountered Wirt Adams cavalry, and had had a brisk skirmish with them. Orders were issued to send out reinforcements to strengthen General Slocum, then on Black river, and if possible bring on a decisive engagement with the enemy. The Brigade was at Vicksburg, and anxiously looking for orders to disembark and join this movement. This was July 10, and during the

fall of a heavy rain, the expected orders were received. The ammunition, rations, camp equipage, etc., were put into the ambulances and two army wagons, secured for the occasion. The progress of the column was slow on account of the muddy and gullied condition of the roads, and of the inability of the wagon train in consequence thereof, to make time over them. Cavalry was met, coming in with wounded, and they reported fighting on the other side of Black River. The column reached this stream about two o'clock on the morning of the 11th, and wet and weary, went into camp. At five o'clock the next morning the whole force was on the move. This force consisted of two thousand cavalry and mounted infantry under command of General Ellet; and four thousand infantry under command of General's Hawkins and Sheppard; the whole force commanded General Slocum. Major Crandall was in command of the Marine Cavalry, and on account of Colonel Currie's illness, and Major Tallerdav's absence, Captain Newell had command of the mounted Marine infantry.

Black River was crossed on a pontoon bridge. The country in the vicinity of this river bore signs of war's havoc. For Grant had fought his way to Vicksburg over this ground, and after the investment of the city by him, it had frequently been the scene of strife and bloodshed. The trees were scarred by bullets, and cut off by cannon balls, while broken muskets, old camp equipage, cast off clothing, etc., were scattered along the road for miles. Different divisions of the command moved out on different roads—the cavalry and mounted infantry under General Ellet going by the Jackson road, and all going in the direction of Edward's Station. This point was reached about nine o'clock a. m., and a rest of an hour was given the men. The weather was hot and the march necessarily slow. During the day there had been some skirmishing with the enemy, on the flank and in the rear, but no real engagement. At night the command went into camp in the woods on the Port Gibson road, with some rain falling. On the 12th the command had an early breakfast, and was soon again on the move, in the direction of Utica, where the column arrived at eleven o'clock a. m. It was not intended to stop any length of time here, but signs indicated the close proximity of a considerable force of enemy, and it was thought prudent to wait until more of the forces should arrive. At this point a company of Confederate Cavalry charged our picket post, and in return a com-

pany of Federal Cavalry, in position on the left of the picket post, unexpectedly charged the enemy, and the Confederates were quickly put to flight, and then closely pursued by our men, who used their pistols and sabres with telling effect. Three of the enemy were killed, and four were captured. The Union troops lost one man. A house near where the Marines were camped was searched, and Confederate uniforms, arms, and other things found in it, which made it clear that this was a rendezvous. Toward evening three sons of the proprietor of this house were captured, coming in to stay over night, and not aware of the presence of Yankees. It seemed that these three young men belonged to some command in that vicinity, and much of the time boarded and slept at home. "This" as Comrade A. J. Pierce remarks in his diary: "must have been very pleasant way of soldiering."

During the day two men of Co. A, Marine Inf., captured a fine mare. She was ridden by a Confederate scout, "Joe" known all over that country. Two Marines seeing this scout at a house, his mare tied to the fence in a lane, slipped up on him from both directions, so that he was compelled to abandon the mare and seek security in flight. At their suggestion Captain Newell paid these two for their capture, and took the mare, which proved to be an elegant, blooded animal, for his own use. When the Brigade was mustered out, at Vicksburg he turned her over to General Slocum's chief of staff, who subsequently rode her through, on Sherman's march to the sea.

Early on the 13th, it being thought necessary to reconnoitre and discover the whereabouts and strength of the enemy, General Ellet proffered men for this duty, and detailed and sent six companies of the mounted Marine infantry. They made a circuit of five miles, and returned without an encounter with the enemy. Soon after their return, the First Miss. Cavalry (a negro regiment) went out to capture some horses, and seeing some Confederates, charged them without waiting to reconnoitre and ran into a nest of the enemy, losing their Major in the melee. At eleven o'clock a. m. the column left Utica, and proceeding in the direction of Port Gibson, formed a junction with the infantry column, about two o'clock p. m., and after crossing Sandy Creek went into camp, in and around the town of Rocky Spring. A detail was sent from this point to communicate orders to the boats

for them to be at Grand Gulf next day. Levi Wiseman of E Inf., one of the detail, had his horse drowned, and lost his arms, saddle and equipment in crossing a stream, and had to make his way back to camp on foot, dodging the enemy who were plentiful, and frequently sighted him. Once a gun was snapped at him, as he was making for a piece of woods. He tells of attempting to capture and ride a loose horse he found in a pasture, but having no bridle or rope, the animal, after a little caressing, galloped off, leaving him to make his way to camp weary and bedraggled, as best he could.

At eight o'clock, on the morning of the 14th, the march was resumed toward Port Gibson. It was reported that General Wirt Adams, had occupied that place, and had proclaimed his intention to remain there despite the Yankees. Nearing the town about two o'clock p. m., the advance began skirmishing with the enemy, who slowly retired. Entering the place without serious opposition, the entire command went into camp. Constant and sharp firing was kept up all that night, on the picket line. Comrade Amos Bellows, in his diary says, that once in the night the Confederates charged the picket post of which he had command, but were repulsed. The morning of the 15th the infantry part of the command left for Grand Gulf, where the boats were in waiting. This weakening of the force, greatly emboldened the enemy. The Marines on picket had but just been relieved by a squad of the 2d N. J. Cav., armed with seven-shooting carbines and revolvers, when the post was charged upon by the rebels—some of the men being killed, and some of them taken prisoners. And then the fight became general. The Marine cavalry and mounted infantry moved up promptly into line, but the assailing force was too strong for them, and the line thus strengthened was driven back, still however, maintaining order. This orderly retreat, and persistent pursuit, continued for several miles, and it was not until the pursuers had been several times ambushed, and severely punished, by the Marine cavalry, who had the rear guard, that they were willing to relinquish the chase. The Union loss at this time, all told, was about seventy-five, and that of the enemy probably greater.

The morning of the 16th, General Slocum ordered the Marine troops ashore, that he might use their boats in transporting his troops to the Jeff. Davis' plantation. On the morning of the 17th, while still

ashore and waiting the further transportation of troops by their boats, the Marines and some few other troops, among which were the two regiments of negro soldiers, were fiercely assailed by the enemy. The attacking force was repulsed, leaving twenty-five of their men, and Major Wood, their commander, dead on the field; with six wounded men, and fifteen other prisoners, in our hands. The Union casualties in this brief fight were but two men wounded, though several horses were killed. During this engagement a Mr. Wilson, a prominent southern citizen, who owned a large plantation near, and who claimed to be a "Union" man, and entitled to Federal protection (having taken the oath of allegiance to the U. S. Govt.) was found, with arm and accoutrements, among the Confederate dead.

About two o'clock a. m. of the 18th, the boats, with the Brigade on board, left for Vicksburg, which was reached about noon.

Thus ended a seven days' expedition, with much skirmishing, and one severe battle for the Marines, in which (owing to their sheltered position) they had at slight loss inflicted a severe punishment upon the enemy.

At two o'clock p. m. of the 19th, the fleet went up to Milliken's Bend, where the Brigade was put into camp, with ten days' rations. The boats were to be used during this period in transporting troops from Vicksburg to Memphis. The place selected for temporary encampment was four miles below the fort, and among some large trees, which afforded grateful shade. This appointed place was reached about six o'clock p. m., and the men were soon busy in disembarking, with such personal belongings, camp equipage, etc., as was deemed necessary, and in removing the horses, grain and hay from the boats. No time was left for making camp, and the men bivouacked as best they could. Comrade Amos Bellows, in his diary says: "I spread my blanket on a pile of oats in the sack, and slept till morning. The dew made me wet." The next day the men moved the things which the boats had left on the bank, near the river, back some forty rods, and established themselves in camp, erecting frame work and spreading their rubber blankets upon the same for shelter, constructing rude mattresses from twigs and leaves to sleep on. The men had just completed these preparations for a comparatively comfortable encampment, when, about five o'clock in the afternoon, the SWITZERLAND came

up from Vicksburg with orders for a change of encampment. The previous day the men had worked until nine or ten o'clock at night in disembarking with their effects, horses and feed, and now they labored again until about the same late hour, replacing their belongings upon the river bank, and making ready for their departure early in the morning.

During the night, while the Marine boats, with the accompanying transports, were passing up stream, heavily loaded with troops and passengers, the transport B. M. Runyan struck a snag, and sunk in an incredibly short time. A gunboat which happened to be near by, rescued most of those on board, and the DIANA, taking them on board, carried them on up stream, stopping at Helena to secure necessary food and clothing for them.

On the morning of the 21st, the Brigade moved to its new place of encampment, Omega Landing, six miles further up. Comrade Bellows remarked of the weather: "This is the hottest day I ever saw." In effecting this change the command, being mounted, went overland, while the camp equipage, rations, horse feed, etc., were transported on the rams MOXARCH and SWITZERLAND. The command moved before the men had their breakfast, and it was noon before they got anything to eat. The camp-ground was far from being as inviting or comfortable as the former one. It was between the levee and the river, and without any shade. That day was spent in carrying camp equipage, rations for the men and feed for the horses, up the steep bank, under a broiling sun. Late in the day the men constructed tepees for themselves, by setting up poles and spreading their blankets over the same.

A considerable force of the enemy had been in this vicinity about a week before, and had destroyed some property, and a larger force was reported, beyond Bayou Mason. Some of the scouts belonging to these commands were hanging around, making a good strong picket necessary. The 22nd was quietly spent by the command in camp, resting from the exhausting work of the two or three preceding days.

On the morning of the 23rd companies C and E of the mounted infantry under the command of Lieutenant Albert Dean, went out on a reconnoissance, but without special incident. During the night two confederates ran up on one of our picket posts, and being halted

and challenged, they opened upon the pickets with balls from their carbines, and with oaths from their mouths, and then fled in the darkness.

At one o'clock, on the morning of the 24th, a messenger arrived from Goodrich's Landing, reporting a threatened attack upon that place, and requesting reinforcement from the Brigade. At four o'clock about two-thirds of the force in camp, under command of Captain Newell started to their relief. Goodrich's Landing was reached about eight o'clock. Here it was reported that the enemy was in force, about Lake Providence. All kinds of stories were afloat as to the numbers and movements of the enemy, their strength being estimated from two thousand, down. The horses were fed and watered and the men lunched and rested, and then with an addition to the force, of a battalion of negro cavalry, the command proceeded toward Lake Providence. When within about a mile of that place, it was learned that the enemy had scattered and disappeared.

The Marines dismounted and rested, while the negro cavalry went on into the town. After a couple of hours the Marines began the return march, followed by the negro cavalry, some distance in their rear. After a short stop at Godrich's Landing, the Marines pushed on toward their camp. When some two or three miles on their way, a negro officer came, in great haste, with word that their cavalry was fighting, and requested the return of the column. But Captain Newell, concluding that it was only another "Goodrich Landing scare," and that the attacking party was probably a small squad, hanging upon the rear of the negro cavalry, refused to turn back, and continued on to camp, which was reached at half past ten o'clock. The command had been out over eighteen hours, having covered some fifty miles during the trip. In the evening the AUTOCRAT arrived from Vicksburg with supplies.

The 25th and 26th were spent quietly in camp. On the 27th, while the FAIRCHILD and ADAMS were on their return from Memphis, they had an exciting experience at Sunnyside Landing. J. H. Stevens, who, with George Thompson of Co. A Cav. was on the FAIRCHILD at the time, as guard for their company property, tells the story thus:

AN EXCITING TIME AT SUNNYSIDE.

After landing the troops carried on our boat to Memphis, we started down the river, and one morning about 9 o'clock, when near Sunnyside Landing, Ark., the Confederates opened fire on us with a masked battery of eight guns, from behind the levee. The Fairchild being in the advance they opened on her at about three hundred yards, and concentrated their fire on us for about fifteen minutes. During this time twenty-seven shots were put into our boat, cutting off the escape pipe which passed up through the men's quarters, and shooting away a part of our steering apparatus, thus causing the boat to drift down with the current. A shell exploded in the deckhands' quarters, and set some bedding on fire, which, however, was promptly extinguished with the hose. Thompson and I were sitting on the front boiler deck when the first shot was fired. We immediately started for our quarters for our carbines, and just as we passed through the cabin door, Thompson in advance, a shell struck him in the back of the head, shooting away a piece of the skull of considerable size. As he fell I caught him, and eased him to the floor, and then went for my carbine. By this time we had drifted out of range, and the rebels had turned their fire on the Adams, which was some distance in the rear of us. The Adams turned and went back up the river, while the Fairchild drifted down about five miles, where we met a gunboat, which after helping us, went on up stream and shelled the battery out of their position. Thompson lived about a week, but was never afterward conscious. He was buried near the bank of the river, just where, I do not remember. The Adams received but one shot, and had one man killed. During the time the Fairchild was under fire, a shot from the enemy's gun struck one of her spars, cutting it in two, and then struck the heavy bulwark around the boilers, and fell on the fore-castle. While it was performing gyrations on the deck one of the colored deckhands grabbed it up and threw it overboard. Being asked why he did it, he said: "I was 'fraid it might 'splode and hurt somebody."

The FAIRCHILD and ADAMS came out of the perils of the enemy's battery, only to encounter another. In making a landing that same evening at Omega, where the Brigade was in camp, these two boats came into somewhat violent collision, and both were seriously damaged. The ADAMS, however, was able to run on down to Vicksburg, while the FAIRCHILD was unable to depart until the next morning, having spent most of the intervening time in making repairs.

On the 28th word was received again from Goodrich's Landing, that the place was threatened, and requesting help. Believing this to be a false alarm, no attention was paid to it. At two o'clock a. m.

of the 29th, the DIANA, FAIRCHILD, and ADAMS, took on troops at Vicksburg and started down stream.

At ten o'clock a. m. of the next day these troops disembarked at Morganza, La., where they joined General Canby's command, and then the three boats returned to Vicksburg, which was reached on the 31st at ten o'clock p. m. On the way up the AUTOCRAT was met, on her way to New Orleans, with General Schoom on board.



CHAPTER IX

Aug., 1864—Jan., 1865

Brigade in Camp at Omega.—Inspected by General Dana.—Resignation of Colonel Currie.—Fleet at Vicksburg.—Orders Dissolving Command and Forming a Regiment.—Ashore.—Indignation and Revolt of the Marines.—New Regiment and Its Roster.—Dog Tents, Dog Outs and Winter Barracks.—Major Purdy Champions the Men's Cause and Goes to The President.—Story of His Interview.—Mr. Lincoln's Order.—Honorably Discharged as Demanded.—Good Byes, and Off for Home.

Between July 31st and August 4th, the usual round of camp duty was performed by the Marines at Omega, nothing of importance transpiring. August 4th found all the fleet assembled at that point. On the 5th orders were issued to the command, to prepare for inspection, and in compliance with the same the camp was put into perfect order, guns and accoutrements were overhauled and cleaned, the horses sleeked up, and the boats thoroughly cleaned.

On the 7th the command was closely inspected by Maj. Gen. N. J. T. Dana, after which the *Autocrat* left for Helena, conveying General Diana, while the men took up their old quarters again on the boats.

It is a matter of history that General Dana's lengthy report of this inspection, has not a word in disparagement of the Brigade, and says that though too much reduced in numbers to be very effective, its vessels afford ready transportation facilities for army use, and are as well cared for as they could be under any government management.

On the 8th, further orders were issued for company commanders to prepare descriptive rolls of all their men.

The *Autocrat* returned from below with General Slocum on

board, reaching Vicksburg during next day, August 9. The acceptance of Colonel Currie's resignation, tendered some time before, was now received, and the Colonel, taking leave of his regiment, started for home.

Colonel Currie's resignation was a serious loss to the command. In many ways he was an ideal soldier. In person he was tall, erect, and soldierly in his bearing. He was well versed in the tactics, handled his men with rare skill, and in action was prompt and intrepid. He knew how to be genial and courteous, though he had an imperious air, and was at times harsh in manner and sharp in utterance—quick to take affront, and slow to forget. Nevertheless his men highly esteemed him as a leader, and followed him with implicit confidence.

On the 10th of August, orders came for the fleet, at Omega Landing, to repair to Vicksburg, which it did, and it was now definitely learned that orders had been issued from Washington, directing the discontinuance of the Brigade as a distinct command, and instructing Gen. E. R. S. Canby, now in command of the Department of West Mississippi, with Headquarters at New Orleans, to carry out these orders. The inspection was a necessary preliminary. Then came the orders, already issued by General Canby, pursuant to his instructions, which read as follows:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE MILITARY DIVISION OF WEST MISSISSIPPI.

New Orleans, La., August 3, 1864.

Special Orders No. 86. (Extract).

III. Under the authority of instructions from the headquarters of the Army, the Mississippi Marine Brigade, as a separate organization, will be discontinued. The enlisted men whose unexpired term of service will justify it, will be sent back under suitable conduct to the regiments from which they were transferred, and those who have but a short period to serve will be assigned to garrison duty at Vicksburg, and will be attached, for the remainder of their term of service, to regiments or batteries serving at that place. The officers appointed for the Brigade will be mustered out of service, as soon as the duties connected with the transfer of the men and property under their charge are completed. Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet, after completing the transfer of the men and property under his charge, will proceed to Washington City, and report in person to the Secretary of War. The vessels of the Marine Brigade will be turned over to the Quartermaster's Department, and will be assigned under the Chief Quartermaster of the Division, as a part of the

reserve transportation required by General Order No. 4, current series from these Headquarters. Officers of the General Staff, on duty with the Brigade, will report by letter to the Chiefs of their Staff Departments at Division Headquarters, for assignment to duty, or for orders. The Major General commanding the District of Vicksburg is charged with the execution of this order, and will cause the transfer of the men to be made with the greatest care, and the military history of each man to be noted on the muster rolls.

By order of Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby.

C. S. CHRISTENSON,

Major and Assistant Adjutant General.

Evidently, in issuing this order, General Canby was unaware of the original conditions of service in the Brigade. He speaks of the men as "transferred" from other regiments into the Marine service, and orders them sent back to the regiments from which they were taken. The men of the Marine Brigade, however, were not "transferred" from other regiments into the Brigade; they were mustered out of their original commands, re-enlisted and regularly mustered into the Marine Brigade. General Canby's misconception respecting the make up of the Brigade, and his error resulting therefrom being pointed out to him, he subsequently modified his order, and directed that the officers and men of the Brigade be consolidated into a single infantry regiment, leaving it to be subject to duty upon land, as any other infantry regiment. But even as thus modified, General Canby's order was distinctly in violation of the terms of their service, and an injustice upon the enlisted men of the command. It had been to meet a military emergency that these men, then mostly convalescents, in hospitals, were induced, by special provisions as to the conditions of service, to leave their original commands, and re-enlist in the Marine Brigade. To now put these men back upon land, to serve out the unexpired term of their enlistment, was to violate all the promises made them to secure that re-enlistment.

But General Canby was deaf to all these considerations, though fully pointed out to him. Men were wanted in his Department, and he had no inclination to let these men go. Finally, despite his earnest remonstrance in the interest of the men, General Ellet was compelled to issue the following, his final order to the command.

HEADQUARTERS M. M. BRIGADE.

Flag Ship Autocrat, August 26, 1864.

Special Orders No. 60. (Extract).

11. In compliance with orders received from Major General Dana, commanding the District of Vicksburg, directing the disorganization of the M. M. Brigade, the First Infantry Regiment of the M. M. Brigade ceases to exist at this date. The following disposition will be made of the officers and enlisted men. The present organization of companies will continue subject to assignment of officers and men to complete them, when they will enter a new regimental organization, and each company will receive designation according to the rank of its commanding officer. The Field and Staff of the First Infantry Regt. M. M. Brigade are assigned to the new regimental organization. The officers of the consolidated Marine Regiment, Lieut. Col. John A. Ellet commanding, will immediately enter upon the discharge of their several duties.

By command of Brig. Gen. A. W. Ellet.

W. D. CRANDALL.

Captain and Asst. Adj. Gen.

Preparatory to the anticipated return of the men to their old regiments (under General Canby's first order) all arms, equipments, and horses, and all other government property, had been turned over to the ordnance and quartermaster's Departments. The men were righteously indignant, and greatly excited, when the foregoing orders were promulgated. They became strongly suspicious even of their own officers, charging them with conniving at the consolidation, that they might retain their commissions and continue in the service.

General Dana, on the other hand, affirmed his belief that the officers were fomenting a spirit of insubordination among the men, in order to bring about a discharge of the entire command. The officers thus found themselves between the upper and nether millstones. The men clamored for some positive assurance from their officers that they would stand with them, in any action decided upon, in securing their discharge, while General Dana, with his iron-clad, regular army views of discipline, demanded unqualified submission to his orders, previous to any consideration of the claims set up by the men, and threatened to imprison, and to iron, any officer making any concessions to his men, or giving them any promises, or who should even offer his resignation, or file any written protest or petition against the proposed change.

Among the turbulent element of the command there was talk of refusal to submit to the orders, and although the great majority of the men, when reasoned with by their officers, decided in favor of obedience, still some few, on one of the boats, refused to go ashore with their companies. In this situation of things the Brigade was reported to the Vicksburg Headquarters as in a state of mutiny, and the 72d Ill. Inf., and the 5th Ill. Cav. were promptly sent to the boats to enforce submission to the orders issued, and to escort the Brigade to its appointed place of encampment. This was of course a humiliation and shame to the whole command. But after a short time there came a rift in this black cloud. Col. Jno. A. Ellet, finding himself blamed, and the object of determined opposition declined to command,



Marines in Their Dog Tents, After Going Ashore at Vicksburg.

and Major Tallerday, being less objectionable to the men, was induced to do so. The armed guard was withdrawn, and Major Tallerday led the Marines out to camp, most of the command marching in quiet, and in good formation. While the Brigade moved out to camp, the forty-eight mutineers were marched off to military prison. These men, however, were in a short time released from confinement, upon promise of good behavior, and sent to their respective companies.

Reaching the place assigned them, the men went into camp, with nothing in the way of shelter but what were known in army parlance as "dog-tents." These were narrow strips of thin, white muslin; big enough when put together and set up in the shape of an A, to cover two men. To enter these tents, however, the men must first get down

on their knees, and then crawl under. These tents were devised for the protection of troops on forced marches, and were to be carried by the men, each of two tent-mates carrying one of the separable sheets, and one-half the light, pine supports. This was indeed a great change from their comfortable quarters on the boats, and was justly felt by both officers and men as a bitter and humiliating experience.

Pursuing the disorganization, all boats of the command, including the rams and tugs, were in due course transferred, as ordered, to the Quartermaster department, and each was disposed of as the service required. Some were retained, with their crews, for transport duty, and some were soon after dismantled and sold, their crews being discharged. The two tugs were retained for some time. Master Granger who had, in the construction and management of these useful little craft, rendered very efficient service, at the dissolution of the Brigade received this personal testimonial from its old Commander, which he prizes very highly:

Headquarters U. S. M. M. Brigade, Flag Ship Autoerat,
Vicksburg, Miss., August 18th, 1864.

It gives me pleasure to certify that Captain A. M. Granger is a very competent Engineer and Builder—a careful, sober and industrious officer, having been employed under my command, since March 1, 1863, in constructing and commanding the beautiful Tugs of the M. M. B. ("Belle Darlington," and "Alf Cutting") it is but justice to say, that he has always given me entire satisfaction.

ALFRED W. ELLET,
Brigadier General Commanding.

In response to the request of the Secretary of War (November 19) for information as to the disposition made of the Marine boats, we find Colonel Sawtelle's inventory and report, of assignment to army quartermasters, as follows:

DISPOSITION OF THE MARINE BOATS.

Diana, Baltic and Alf. Cutting—Morganza, La.

Autoerat and Raine—Memphis.

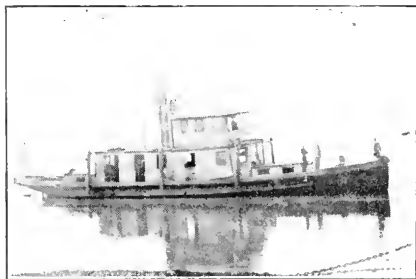
Adams, Fairchild and Belle Darlington—Vicksburg.

Fulton, Natchez.

Monarch, Switzerland, Lioness, Horner and Cleveland—New Orleans.

NOTE—Some of these boats are now undergoing repairs.

Upon completion of the work of transfer some weeks later, including the orders for organization and assignment, and the discharge of supernumerary non-commissioned officers, whose terms of service were near expiration, Capt. W. D. Crandall closed his office as Assistant Adjutant General of the Brigade, and turned over all its records, books



The Belle Darlington.

and papers, and the property of the office to the Adjutant General of the District at Vicksburg, for transmission to Washington. In later years the fact has developed that these important records and documents never reached their destination. They were probably regarded at the time as unimportant, and in the office changes so frequently occurring there they were lost sight of, and later destroyed. The want of these records has made difficult all efforts of the survivors of the crews of boats, in presenting claims to the department, and in some instances the character, and even the names, of the boats of the Brigade, have been called in question.

Among the remembrances of this unpleasant period, which General Ellet carried with him, on leaving the scene of his many conflicts, after the dissolution of his command, was a series of loyal and appreciative resolutions, drawn up and signed by all the officers, crew and soldiers of the *Moxarch*. It was a great satisfaction to him to have those who had so long served with him, thus show their loyal devotion, at the final separation. It is but true to the facts to state that retiring under these circumstances the General was blamed for the unhappy condition of affairs, but his own prompt retirement from the service, and the efforts he was found to have made in behalf of his men, led to a better understanding, and the ultimate disappearance of the feelings of rancor.

When taking leave of those of the staff remaining to close up the affairs of the Brigade, the General, who was under direction to await orders at Philadelphia, expressed in his most hearty and cordial manner, his esteem for each of them, and assured them that should he be assigned a suitable command, he would gather them up again as his

official family. But the separation was final. The staff was variously assigned and scattered, and after a month or two of waiting General Ellet resigned. In this closing mention of the officers and affairs of the Marine Brigade, we remark that our Historians have not attempted to follow further the services, or individual lives, of either officers or men of the command, that being beyond the scope marked out for this history.

The next day after reaching camp, the work of consolidating the former command into one infantry regiment was begun. The old infantry regiment was made the basis of this reorganization, the line officers of the regiment still retaining their own men. The cavalrymen, and the men from the rams were distributed among these companies, according to the need of men in each company to bring it up to the maximum. Thus the new regiment when organized, contained about one thousand men. Officers from the cavalry, and the ram fleet were assigned to fill vacancies where they existed among company officers, and took rank according to the date of their commissions.

This reorganization resulted in a reduction of the company officers in the regular line of promotion from two to three grades. For instance, the captain of Co. A, in the original infantry regiment, became in the new regiment captain of Co. C, one captain from the cavalry and another from the ram fleet bearing older commissions, and stepping in before him.

It will be of historic interest to place here the roster of the new organization, as nearly complete as the record will permit.

OFFICERS OF THE (CONSOLIDATED) MARINE REGIMENT.

Lieutenant Colonel, John A. Ellet.

Major, D. S. Tallerday.

Co. A. Captain, A. Conner; First Lieut., Perry Gregg; Second Lieut., Ed. Ellet.

Co. B. Captain, J. R. Crandall; First Lieut., Tobias S. Benson; Second Lieut., Francis Aid.

Co. C. Captain, I. D. Newell; First Lieut., Philip F. Howell; Second Lieut., Theodore H. Guildemeister.

Co. D. Captain, E. G. Hughes; First Lieut., J. M. Cox; Second Lieut., George Watham.

Co. E. Captain, O. F. Brown; First Lieut., Delos E. Wilson; Second Lieut., J. C. Fortune.

Co. F. Captain, C. G. Fisher; First Lieut., Gershom Markle; Second Lieut., Richard Edet.

Co. G. Captain, Thos. C. Groshon; First Lieut., Onesimus W. Whitehead; Second Lieut., Albert Dean.

Co. H. Captain E. S. Havens; First Lieut., Doane.

Co. I. Captain, James P. Harper; First Lieut., Robert S. Murphy.

Co. K. First Lieut., Michael Brennan; Second Lieut., B. F. Housel.

N. B.: Names of Surgeon, Assistant Surgeon, Adjutant and Quartermaster are not found.

The reader will notice mention of several officers in this roster, at a grade lower than that in which they have been often spoken of in the foregoing pages. The reason is that they had been serving in a rank to which promotion was due, and for which they had been recommended, but no commissions had been received, and only their actual rank could be recognized in the re-organization. Several non-commissioned officers were thus wholly denied the rank and pay due for actual service as commissioned officers. In later years Congress, in one or two instances (notably that of Capt. F. V. De Coster) conferred the rank and pay so justly earned, and so long withheld.

About the time the organization was completed, Capt. C. G. Fisher was, by order from General Dana's headquarters, named as one of a military commission (and as Judge Advocate of it) to convene, September 5th, "for the trial of Frank Mongold, a citizen, and such other prisoners as may be brought before it." No record of the work of this commission is extant.

On the second day of its existence, the new regiment was called into line, and inspected by Colonel Starring, of the 72d Ill. Vols., who commanded the Brigade to which it was assigned. Colonel Starring, despite his unpleasant relations to the Marines at the time they were put ashore, was most favorably impressed by his inspection of the men, and because he was a gentleman, as well as a soldier, readily won the respect and confidence of both officers and men. He was quick to see the injustice done the Marines in this matter, but too discreet to make any open expression respecting it. He spent much time in the camp of the new regiment, became personally acquainted with the officers, heard patiently, but silently, the protests and complaints of the men, and at the same time maintained a stern, steady, even discipline.

The Marines could not have fallen into better hands during this trying time in their experience. The history of this period need not be traced day by day, as has the history of the Brigade. The record must therefore be generalized.

A fresh supply of arms, equipments, camp equipage, etc., was drawn, and assigned to the men, which they accepted under protest, being instructed by attorneys, whose advice they sought and followed to do nothing except under protest, and to sign no papers of any kind, without writing after their names the word "protest." Captain Newell well remembers one morning being summoned by an orderly to report immediately at regimental Headquarters, and there finding Colonel Starring, the brigade commander, and Major Tallerdoy, in command of the regiment, sitting together in the shade. His own "Morning Report," made out and carried up as usual by the orderly sergeant, was produced by the Major, and the Colonel wrathfully pointing to the offending word "protest," written after the orderly's name, on the bottom of the page and inquiring, "Captain what does this mean?" It was an "eye opener" to the captain of the company. It seemed that after he had inspected and signed the report, this word "protest" had been added to it. With a firm but courteous injunction from the Colonel to permit no repetition of that action, the captain returned to his company to interview his orderly. It is sufficient to say that there was no repetition of the offense. But the orderly sergeant was not so much to blame. He had proven himself an efficient man in his place; had always been scrupulously faithful in the discharge of his duties, and was fully trusted and highly esteemed by his captain.

Regular details were now daily made from the new regiment for guard and fatigue duty. Very soon the command settled down to the regular performance of garrison duty, and in due time General Dana, commanding the Department of Vicksburg, expressed his appreciation of the soldierly qualities of the Marines, and his perfect satisfaction with their performance of whatever duties were assigned them.

But the men were far from satisfied with the situation, and while the surface of the hitherto ruffled waters had become smooth, the undertow continued to run with a strong and steady current. Just previous to this time, Mr. James H. Purdy, formerly major of the 59th N. Y. Inf., having been honorably discharged from service because of

disabling wounds received in the battle of Antietam, in company with Clark Wright, formerly Colonel of the 6th Mo. Cav., had established themselves in the practice of law, at Vicksburg. Some of the Marines sought an interview with Mr. Purdy, made a statement of their case, and sought his advice as to the best method of procedure in seeking redress of their grievance, and honorable muster out of service. Mr. Purdy said to his would-be-clients that "It was impossible for him to secure a discharge, except upon grounds which, as well, entitled all other members of the late Brigade to their discharge; that General Canby's order, having been made and executed, under instructions from the War Department, no relief could be hoped for unless it be obtained from President Lincoln himself, upon petition of the whole Brigade—a proceeding doubtful of results, and which would involve great effort, and large expense. Mr. Purdy was expecting soon to start for Washington on other business, and proposed to undertake the case, in the interest of all the Marines, upon the following conditions; first the men were to pay him in cash \$500.00 as a retainer, and for necessary travelling and other expenses, and secondly, the men were each to pay, in addition, \$15.00 in cash, after he secured their discharge from further service.

The men acceded to these terms, promptly fulfilling the first condition, and faithfully promised to meet the second. When Mr. Purdy reached St. Louis he drew up a circular letter, a copy of which he sent to each of the Governors of sixteen states, represented by the enlisted men in the Marine Brigade, setting forth the principal facts as to the enlistment of the men, conditions, promises, etc., and also the recent orders in violation of said conditions, all of which have been set forth in preceding pages. He then invoked their co-operation in his appeal to the President to right the injustice and wrong done these men, and order their honorable discharge.

As soon as the regiment had become amenable to discipline, so that they dare venture so to do, the officers of the regiment, ignorant of the action taken by the men, convened upon call, and appointed a committee to draw up a statement of the injustice done themselves and their men. This statement went to Washington, through the regular military channels, being favorably endorsed by Colonel Starring, in command of the brigade, by General Dana commanding the Department of Vicksburg, and so on up to the Secretary of War.

Dissatisfied with the insufficient protection afforded them by their "dog-tents" and being promised nothing better, the men set about providing better quarters for themselves. Excavations, in imitation of the Vicksburg citizens during the siege, were made in the hills on either side of the ravine where the regiment was encamped. These excavations were covered over with the muslin of the "dog-tents" for a roof. In the back end of many of these "dugouts," were cut fireplaces, within which, as the nights grew cooler, cheerful fires blazed. Some of these caves were artistically adorned, niches being dug out of the side walls, into which were introduced such decorations as the Marines were able to pick up about the city. Statuary was carved out of the clay, bunks, chairs, tables, etc., were constructed from fugitive pieces of lumber picked up, and thus the men made themselves more comfortable than otherwise they would have been. October 23rd, while excavating one of these under ground quarters, Charles Wilgar, of Co. B, infantry in the old regiment (Co. H in the new) was caught by a "cave-in," and crushed to death.



Winter Quarters of the Marine Regiment. Built from Lumber of Their Own Sawing and Heated by Stoves of Their Own Casting.

About this time it was realized that the command must have better quarters in which to winter. Accordingly preparations were begun for the building of barracks.

The plan adopted was as follows: A building for the enlisted men of each company, sixteen by eighty feet, to be constructed of boards sawed from native lumber; these buildings to be sixteen feet apart, with the front ends aligned on the main avenue of the camp.

and kitchens in the rear. The officers' quarters to be on the opposite side of the main avenue, facing the front end of the men's barracks. In the men's barracks, the bunks to be built lengthwise with the building, two tiers on each side with aisle between, and two rooms partitioned off at the front end, one for the orderly sergeant, and the other for the other sergeants of the company.

Plenty of good cypress timber was obtainable up the Yazoo, and details from the Marines were sent after it. A good sawmill was near the camp, which the Marines were permitted to run at night in sawing lumber for their barracks. Persons in the regiment, competent to man this mill were found and designated for this special duty, and excused from all other service. The captain having charge of these night details, alternating with his lieutenants. Many weary nights were spent in this old sawmill.

Carpenters competent to boss the construction of the buildings were also found within the regiment, and with plenty of "under help" the buildings went up rapidly. When they were completed, stoves were in demand to warm them. There was a foundry in the city of Vicksburg, which the Marines were granted permission to use, and plenty of huge shells—fired from Union guns during the siege, lying around loose. A canvass of the regiment was again made, "pattern makers" and "moulders" discovered among the men, and large stoves, each with the name of the company and regiment upon it, were cast and put together, ready for use. Indeed upon this occasion, as upon every other, the Marines showed themselves capable of accomplishing almost anything required of them.

This well illustrates the versatility of talent found among the men of the Brigade. But there was also among them talent for sketching and painting, and other artistic work, and of correspondence, and literary production, there was an abundance. The only poetic effusion that found its way into print and general circulation, was that of Private John J. Spilman, whose rhymes related the doings of the Marines, with a jingle that delighted the hearts of the boys.

Toward the end of December the Memphis papers proclaimed the coming muster out of the Marine Regiment, and published the order from Washington for the same. But while delighted over the news,

the men were eager to finish their barracks, which they were able to do, before the muster out order was issued from Vicksburg.

To return to Major Purdy and his mission: It will be remembered, he sent circular letters to the Governors of some of the states, setting forth the grievances of the Marines, and their just claim to discharge, and asking the co-operation of these Governors.

Nearly all of these Governors wrote him favorably, and General Ellet, from Philadelphia (whither he had been sent to await assignment to duty) also added a strong plea for the righting of the Marines' wrongs.

Armed with these documents, Mr. Purdy repaired to Washington. His story of his mission at Washington, was published some years since, and is worthy a place in these annals:

MAJOR PURDY'S OWN STORY OF SECURING LINCOLN'S ORDER.

Arriving at Washington, I lost no time in presenting myself at the White House to John Hay, private secretary to the President, explaining my mission and desire to see Mr. Lincoln when I might have at least a half hour's hearing. He explained to me why such an interview was difficult to obtain at that time, but kindly invited me to come daily at ten o'clock in the morning watching the opportunity, and the first that offered he would try to gain for me the desired audience.

Every morning for three weeks I was promptly present with the multitude in waiting, only to have Mr. Hay shake his head, signifying the opportunity had not come. At last one morning he pushed through the throng and grasped me by the hand, saying, "Now is your chance, if ever; come quickly with me," and he ushered me into Mr. Lincoln's apartments and presence, and introduced me, there being but one other visitor.

On the Union side this period was the darkest hour of the war. Mr. Lincoln was haggard and cadaverous. He seemed to carry the whole weight of the Nation's burden upon his shoulders, and his heart to suffer all the people's grief and sorrows. I had often seen him during the first year of the war, but now he was greatly changed. The only visitor left us alone, whereupon I announced my mission, and presented the case as briefly, strongly and comprehensively as I could. How these men had served with their regiments in the field, many of them for nearly their full term of enlistment, and from wounds or sickness having been sent to convalescent camps throughout the States, were induced to take discharge from their old regiments, and to re-enlist in the Marine Brigade, where they were promised good quarters on transports, fitted out expressly for them; where they would keep all valuables, clothing, stores, etc.; that they should have no long, hard marches, no camping without

tents or without food, no heavy knapsacks to carry; that they would always have good comfortable quarters and facilities for cooking; that the boats would be a sort of floating hospital, from which, as these convalescents became physically able, they would be required to make only short forays on land; that the sole purpose of their new service was to keep the Mississippi and its tributaries clear of rebel guerrillas, and secure to the public the safe and free navigation of these great highways.

I showed original printed posters which had been put up in the various camps by the officers when recruiting for the brigade, recounting all those and other things as inducements to the convalescent soldiers to take discharge and re-enlist for three years in the Marine Brigade. I urged that its avowed objects having been accomplished and the organization dissolved, the men could not be held to land service except in violation of all those promises which constituted the inducement and consideration of their contract of re-enlistment. That it was not possible to reconcile upon principles of good faith those terms accepted by the men on re-enlistment for service on water, with this attempt to hold them to a different service.

Listening attentively a while, Mr. Lincoln interrupted me, saying: "Major Purdy, from your own service as a soldier, you are presumed to be loyal and true, and in common with us all to desire, above all things, the early triumph of the Union armies. Now, at this time, the darkest hour in our Nation's history, do you think you are serving your country well in urging the discharge of over a thousand soldiers now serving at the front, when we need them so badly?"

I replied, "Mr. President, I am simply a messenger bearing direct to you the petition of these men, who are ready to accept without murmur your decision, whatever it may be. I appear and speak also as their advocate, and I respectfully submit that the question presented for your decision is not affected by what might be the character, color or condition of any such messenger or advocate of these petitioners."

Mr. Lincoln then summoned a page and directed him to go over to the War Department and ask Assistant Secretary of War, Charles A. Dana, later editor of the *New York Sun*, to come over. Mr. Dana was then acting Secretary of War, during the illness of Secretary Stanton. He came very soon and to the President's inquiry into the organization and status of the Marine Brigade, answered that their obligation was to serve as soldiers for three years, or during the war, on the Mississippi River, or with regiments in the field, as they might be required.

Mr. Lincoln responded, "From what Major Purdy has said and shown me, it seems to be a question whether we can rightfully hold these men longer in the service, now that the Marine Brigade is dissolved. We must keep faith with the men who have fought and are fighting our battles. Our promises to them must be sacredly fulfilled. I can not now decide this case. Please take all these papers, and Mr. Purdy will go with you and make his statements,

Examine fully and report to me as early as you can your opinion, and if these men ought to be discharged they must be and without delay, otherwise they must be pushed to the extreme front, where now they are so much needed."

What other commander-in-chief of the armies and navies of our country, or of any other nation, in any age, in face of war's necessities, would have stopped to consider so studiously the rights of the soldier, to carefully weigh them in the scales of justice, to liberally interpret them in his favor, and enforce as sacred every promise made to the soldier! What other great war captain in history would have hesitated, under the circumstances, to deny the petition, and probably to arrest the advocate, and punish the petitioners for mutiny!

Accompanying Mr. Dana to the War Department, I rehearsed the facts upon which the petition was based, and he promised to give the subject his early attention and report to Mr. Lincoln as soon as possible, but he did not impress me with hope of my success.

Daily for three weeks I called upon him to inquire if he had reached his conclusion, and as often was answered in the negative, though always in the most courteous manner. At last, upon calling one morning, Mr. Dana left his desk and the crowd about him, and coming to me received me most cordially, saying, "When are you going back to Vicksburg?" I replied, "I shall go at once upon learning your opinion and the President's action with respect to the petition I presented." He then returned to his desk, brought forward an official letter and said, "Then you may return tonight, for here is Mr. Lincoln's order for the final discharge of the Marine Brigade. Appreciating your persistent and successful labors in behalf of these men, I will make you bearer of the order to General Canby at New Orleans, if you will proceed at once with it." I readily consenting, he said: "Take these papers down stairs to Adjutant General Townsend, and he will prepare, countersign and give you the orders you are to carry."

Supremely happy, I took the train that night for Cairo. Stopping at Cincinnati, whom should I meet at the Burnet house but my associate, Col. Clark Wright, with his wife and the 16-year-old daughter of the proprietor of the Washington hotel of Vicksburg, with whom they had just arrived to place her at school at the Oxford Young Ladies' Institute, Cincinnati. I was greatly provoked to find Col. Wright absent from his post and duty to me at that time at Vicksburg. He explained that General Dana, then in command, had refused a permit to the young lady to leave his lines, her family's sympathies being with the Confederates, and that he (Wright) having a pass for himself and wife, had smuggled the young lady aboard the steamer, and brought her along with them. He had scarcely told the story before in came Capt. James M. Haworth, our mutual friend (afterward, until his death, Indian agent) just from Cairo, Ill., where he had arrived from Vicksburg by the next steamer following, hurrying to overtake and inform Wright that General Dana, upon discovery of the young lady's departure, and Colonel Wright's agency therein,

had published a reward of a thousand dollars for his capture within his (Dana's) jurisdiction, and had sent the fast steam tug, Racket, up the river in pursuit of him.

Wright and Haworth then prevailed upon me to change my plan and go no further, but to stop and take steps toward getting Wright out of the scrape. For that purpose to appeal to General Grant, then at Petersburg, Va. This I did successfully, obtaining in a few days General Grant's order countermanding General Dana's for Wright's arrest.

Not to delay delivery of the order for discharge of the brigade, I gave it into Haworth's hands, with my general power of attorney to collect from the members of the brigade the payments they had promised me. He immediately proceeded to New Orleans and delivered the orders to General Canby for discharge of the brigade. The order was executed without delay and the boys paid off at Vicksburg and immediately sent by steamer to Cairo.

As they were paid off Captain Haworth appeared at the pay table to collect said fees promised by them, and which they were ready and willing to pay, but at that moment stepped up an officer with a guard and order from General Dana upon Haworth, prohibiting him from receiving a dollar from the boys, under pain of arrest and imprisonment. The boys immediately boarded the steamer in waiting and were taken to Cairo, from whence they scattered throughout the States, going to their homes and families and sweethearts. Many of the boys doubtless soon returned to the army.

Of the thousand or more in number then, how few remain to learn from me for the first time this history of their discharge. Though personally unacquainted with the members of the late brigade, this reminiscence may be interesting to them, in the closing chapters of the history of the Mississippi Marine Brigade.

The following is a copy of the final order from Washington, secured by Mr. Purdy:

WAR DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Washington, December 5, 1864.

Special Order No. 431 (Extract).

The enlisted men of the organization formerly known as the Mississippi Marine Brigade, who enlisted for and were mustered into that organization, will upon receipt of this order, be mustered out of the service of the United States, and those detached from regiments in the field (without re-enlisting) will be returned to their respective regiments to serve out their term of enlistment.

The Commanding Officer of the Military Division of the West Mississippi is charged with the execution of this order.

By order of the Secretary of War.

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

To complete the record, we give General Washburn's order, issued at Vicksburg, in compliance with, and in execution of, the foregoing orders from Washington:

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF VICKSBURG.

Vicksburg, Miss., January 2, 1865.

Special Order No. 2.

IT. Pursuant to S. O. No. 434, dated Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D. C., December 5th, and S. O. No. 24, Headquarters Department of West Mississippi, Memphis, Tenn., December 29, 1864, Capt. J. D. De Russey, U. S. Inf., Mustering and Disbursing Officer, Vicksburg, Miss., will at once proceed to muster out of service the enlisted men of the organization formerly known as the Mississippi Marine Brigade, who were enlisted for, and mustered into that organization. All soldiers now connected with that organization, who were detached from regiments in the field without re-enlisting, will be returned to their respective regiments, to serve out their terms of enlistment.

Captain De Russey will make out a special Roll and Descriptive Lists, of all such as are detained in the service, and the Quartermaster will furnish transportation to their respective regiments.

By order of Maj. Gen. C. C. Washburne.

W. H. MORGAN.

A. A. G.

Once in a while during this dreary period of service a little incident would happen to break the monotony. One evening, during dress parade of the regiment, as the music and colors were marching to position, the base drummer, Tobias Vogler, stubbed his toe, and keeled heels over head, drum and all, but managed not to miss a beat. There was a broad smile along the front rank, and something from the rear rank sounding very like a suppressed guffaw.

On the 12th of December, all Marines on picket and other duty were relieved, and sent to their quarters. This day, and the following, were consumed by the regiment in turning over to the proper departments, the arms, accoutrements, and property of the regiment, so far as the same could be spared. Between the 13th and the final discharge of the men, which was not completed until some time in January, roll-call, guard mount and dress parade without arms, were duly observed, lest the men should forget that they were still soldiers, and as such still held to orderly conduct, and amenable to discipline. Dur-

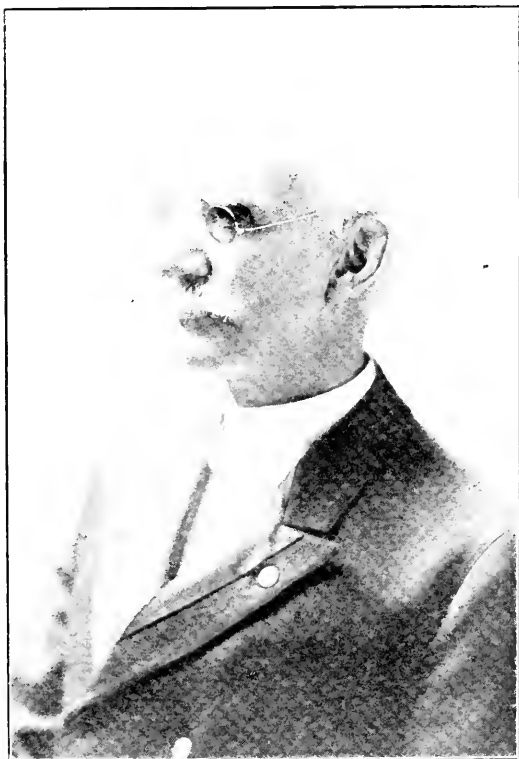
this interval of waiting, the officers were busy preparing the requisite rolls for the muster-out, and the final payment of the men.

This work consumed several weeks—or at least there was a delay of that period—running to about the middle of January, when the Marine Regiment had ceased to be, and the last of the officers and the men were restored to citizenship, and on their homeward way rejoicing.

If in the mind of any unbiased reader of these pages, there lingers a thought of censure for the brave men who, under the trying circumstances narrated, momentarily hesitated in yielding to what seemed an unendurable wrong, let the final order of the President, for their Honorable Discharge—all they had asked, and only what they demanded, as their right—be their full and sufficient exoneration.

THE END.

A COMRADE WHOM THE SURVIVORS OF THE MARINE
BRIGADE DELIGHT TO HONOR.



Henry Noble Couden, Corpl. D Cav., M. M. B.
(The Blind Chaplain of the House of Representatives.)

Comrade Couden was born in Marshall Co., Ind., November 21, 1842. His parents settled near Cincinnati, where his school days were spent, preferably on the farm, with out door life, and its scenes and sports, rather than with books. He enlisted, at 18,—April 16, 1861—in Co. K 6th O. V. I., for three months service, and then re-enlisting in same for three years. He participated in battles at Laurel Hill,

Greenbrier, and Elkwater, and was with his company at Shiloh, Perryville, and many minor engagements. Re-enlisted into Co. D Cavalry, Marine Brigade, losing his rank of Sergeant in so doing, but was shortly made Corporal. He escaped injury in the Duck River fight, but at the fourth charge of the enemy upon the Marine cavalry, at Beaver Dam Lake, he received the blinding charge of bird-shot in the face and eyes, which destroyed his sight. He was at the same time wounded by a bullet in the left arm, and by another in the left side. He was in hospital until July 6, when he was discharged on account of his permanent disability, returning to his home, to enter upon a seven years course of education in the School for the Blind, at Columbus, O. He became interested in science and history, and later in religion, joining the Universalist church, and entering its theological school—St. Lawrence University—at Canton, N. Y., where he graduated in 1878—prepared for the ministry. His first pastorate was the First Universalist Church, Madrid, N. Y. He has since served churches at Willoughby, O., Chatham, Mass., and Port Huron, Mich. After being honored with post and department chaplaincies of the G. A. R. he was elected Chaplain of the House of Representatives in the 54th Congress, and has been re-elected by each successive Congress, since.

Dr. Conden, was first married in 1878, to Lydia Jane Dickinson, of Amherst, Mass. Four children were born of this union—3 sons and a daughter—the mother dying at the birth of the latter, and the 3rd son a short time after. The older son, Henry T., Jr., after seeing service in the Spanish war in Cuba, was fatally injured by a fall from his horse, in Seattle, Wash., 1906, and now sleeps in the National Cemetery, Washington, D. C. The second son, Fayette D. is an expert in the Bureau of Entomology. Dr. Conden was again married, to Hattie Dunbar, of Mt. Vernon, O., who is his constant attendant, and amanuensis, and the beloved companion of his declining years.

THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR HISTORY COMMITTEE, TO
WHOSE EFFORTS THE PUBLICATION OF THIS
WORK IS LARGELY DUE.



Josiah Marion Fulkerson, Orderly Serg't Co. B Infantry.

I was born in a log cabin on my father's farm, near Plainfield, Ohio, November 9, 1844. My forefathers landed at Jamestown, Va., from the British Isles, several years before the Revolutionary War, in which they fought with Washington for the freedom of our country. Owing to the slavery question dividing our family up, my great

grandfather moved to Ohio, in 1795, on account of that being free territory. I spent my boyhood days on the farm, attending our district school during the winter months, until I was fifteen years old, when I began to teach school during the summer. Later attended high school at our county town during the winter, and paid my board by working nights and mornings.

During the winter of 1861-2, the 80th Ohio Regiment came through on train going West, to the seat of War, and I enlisted in company H, and went with them, February 15, 1862.

I was at the siege of Corinth, May, '62; battle of Iuka, September 19, '62, and the battle of Corinth, October 3-4, 1862. I was wounded on the last day of the fight, and in a few days was sent to the Mound City Hospital, where I stayed until January, 1863, when I re-enlisted in company B Inf., M. M. Brigade, and was sent to Benton Barracks, Mo. I served with this command until mustered out at Vicksburg, January 18, 1865.

After my somewhat eventful army life I settled down to peaceful pursuits, in the old smoky city of Pittsburg, where I worked hard and faithfully from the bottom to the top rung of the ladder, in a light manufacturing plant. I remained there some fourteen years, when, on account of my hard work and close attention to business I lost my health, and by the advice of my physician I was compelled to leave Pittsburg. I soon settled down to business once more this time, in Kansas City, Mo., where I started one of the first steam laundries in that city. I had remarkable success, and for some time operated three steam laundries, but owing to the terrible panic of the early 90s, when the bottom dropped out of Kansas City, in a business way, I was compelled to give up my business there. I moved to St. Louis, in the spring of 1892, where I am still engaged in the laundry business. I have been married three times and have five daughters and two sons living. I have always tried to make as loyal and patriotic a citizen as I was a soldier, and I have always kept in touch with all my comrades.

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THIS HISTORY, TO WHOSE
PAINSTAKING LABORS THE PRODUCTION OF PART
II IS MAINLY TO BE CREDITED.



Isaac Denison Newell, Captain Co. A. Inf., M. M. B.

Captain Newell was born in Rushville, Schuyler Co., Ill., July 2nd, 1837. He was of New England parentage, his father and mother being Vermonters, and hence (like the proud ante-bellum Virginian) was entitled to write "F. F. V." after his name.

The son of a pioneer Baptist minister, he had no permanent home, spending his boyhood days in Canton, and Peoria, later locating at Up-

per Alton, Ills., where he received his earlier education, at Shurtleff College. Residing in Bunker Hill, Ills., at the outbreak of the civil war, when the call came for 75,000 three months volunteers, he enlisted in the home company, which became Co. F, 7th Ill. Inf. At the end of the three months he re-enlisted in Co. A of the same regiment, and participated in the battles of Fort Henry, Donelson, Pittsburg Landing, siege of Corinth, and also in the second fight at Corinth, in which he was the color-bearer of the regiment. Soon afterward he was tendered the Captaincy of his company by the Colonel. But, imbued with the idea that volunteer soldiers should be allowed to elect their own officers—and not being one of the original members, could not expect to be their choice—he declined. Soon afterward he was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the Marine Brigade, and ordered to report to General Ellet, at St. Louis. Within a month he was made Captain of Co. A Inf., Marine Brigade, and with that rank was mustered out, at Vicksburg, in January, 1865.

After the war Captain Newell took to merchandising, but later, decided to enter the Baptist ministry. As a preparation for this he took a two years course of select studies, and two years in theology, in Shurtleff College, and one year in Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa., where he graduated. His first pastorate was in Moline, Ills. Thence he removed to Nebraska, where most of his ministerial life has been spent. He was in Kansas for a period of about twelve years, and was for six years the General Missionary of the Baptist denomination in that state.

December 24th, 1867, Captain Newell was married to Miss A. G. Bartlett. To them three girls and three boys were born, four of whom, two boys and two girls are still living.

THE HISTORIAN OF THE RAM FLEET AND MARINE
BRIGADE; RECORDER AND TREASURER OF THE
SOCIETY OF SURVIVORS, UNDER WHOSE
AUSPICES THIS HISTORY IS PUB-
LISHED.



**Warren Daniel Crandall, Captain and Asst. Adj. General
Mississippi Marine Brigade.**

Captain Crandall was born in Manlius, N. Y., July 8, 1838. Parents removed in 1842 to Marine, Ill., where his early life was spent, and education obtained. Was at Illinois College, Jacksonville, when war broke out. Enlisted in home company in July, 1861; made 1st

Lieutenant of Company D (then 9th Mo.) Inf., at St. Louis Arsenal, and served in both fall and winter campaigns in southwest Missouri. Regiment was re-named the 59th Ill. Inf., just before the battle at Pea Ridge, March, '62. Detached (with other officers and men) to serve on the Miss. Ram Fleet. Commanded Ram Lioness, April to October, '62. Promoted to be Captain and A. A. G., M. M. Brigade, serving with it from organization to disbanding, August, '64. Assigned to duty at General Rosecrans headquarters, St. Louis (September); thence, later, to a brigade in Army of the James. Resigned December, 1864. After the war, he read law, and was admitted to the bar in St. Louis. Later settled at Brookfield, became editor of a newspaper which he published for twenty-four years, being also prominently identified with the State Temperance work of Missouri. Postmaster under Harrison. Moving to St. Louis, he was later, Superintendent of the Soldiers' Home at St. James, Mo., for several years. Home in St. Louis.

Captain Crandall was married in 1863, to Miss Georgia M. Nance, principal of one of the St. Louis Public Schools. Of their family of four children, a son and daughter, both married, survive.

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